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A HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
By Emile Legouis & L. Cazamian
In Two Volumes

A HISTORY OF
ENGLISH LITERATURE
MODERN TIMES
(1660–1914)

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BY
EMILE LEGOUIS & LOUIS CAZAMIAN
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VOLUME TWO

MODERN TIMES
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BY
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Translated from the French by
W. D. MacInnes, M.A., and the Author

New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1928

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Set up and electrotyped.
Published September, 1927.
Reprinted March, 1928.

Printed in the United States of America by
J. J. LITTLE AND IVES COMPANY, NEW YORK
AND CORNWALL PRESS, CORNWALL, N. Y.

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INTRODUCTION

The literature of the English language, one of the literatures richest in original beauty, is the most extensive ever known to the world. Literary production in the past and the present, taken together, has attained to a greater mass in English than in any other tongue, ancient or modern. Long though this work be, it does not attempt to cover the whole field. It has confined itself to the English literature of the British Isles, leaving to others both the literature of the United States and the literatures of the various British dominions, a vast subject which is growing with prodigious rapidity. Only by forgoing any picture of literary expression overseas, has it been possible to trace the history of English literature not too superficially, and to show its development coherently and harmoniously, because with unity of place.

This history was first written for the students of English who, year by year, are becoming more numerous in the universities of France. Its appeal was also to all those Frenchmen who have a curiosity regarding England and things English, who desire to reduce the results of scattered reading to order, to grasp the dominating features of succeeding periods and follow the reflection in books of the development of a great people. The authors had not the ambition to reach the English public, which was, they already knew, richly provided with histories of literature, both erudite and brilliant, ample or condensed, the productions of one or of several minds.

The expectation of the authors was therefore exceeded when their work was so favourably received in Great Britain that its translation into English was deemed desirable. It may be that their enterprise was thus fortunate partly because of the character they intentionally gave it. Their experience as university professors had warned them that, if they were to prepare their own students for knowledge of a foreign literature, they must take into account certain demands proper to the mentality of their nation: they must satisfy that need for connected composition, for the presentment of a chain of facts and ideas, without which the French do not easily assimilate the matter they study. The unforeseen result of the method they therefore pursued was that the English critics found in their book a certain novelty; they considered that even in English it would not overlap with any other work, but would be attractive and useful. Moreover, the authors' view of English literature is that of outsiders, who are indeed fervent admirers of its strength and splendour, but yet have an independence of mind due to their foreign training, to the fact that they have not inherited nor been nurtured on this literature, but have approached it consciously and of deliberate choice, as men rather than as children; and their judgments may in consequence have an added impartiality, their praise more weight. In these ways there is compensation for the inevitable inferiority of a foreign historian, his lack of the instinctive, almost innate love, which immediately affects the subconscious mind and may inspire the critic of his own nation's work with some such moving, profound epithet as reveals the race. Duly conscious as they are of this original taint, the authors were the more pleased when they found their conception of English literature to be far from unacceptable to British minds. The agreement seems to them proof that the friendly effort they have made to penetrate the mysteries of an intellectual nationality, and to share it in so far as outsiders may, has not been entirely in vain.

It is true that the generous reception accorded to this book does not stand in isolation. French study of English literature has had no more valuable encouragement than the benevolent interest with which it has been followed in England during the last half-century and especially during the last thirty years. It is encouragement justly bestowed considering, merit apart, the lack of prejudice and the fervour, even enthusiasm, with which English is now studied in France.

Although the production of theses for the doctorate was naturally hindered for a time by the war, those existing already deal with all the various periods of English literature from the beginning to the present day. Among those of which the subjects are general, we find *The Feeling for Nature in Anglo-Saxon Poetry, The English Masques of the Renascence, The English Public and English Men of Letters in the Eighteenth Century, The Social and Literary History of the Town of Bath, English Poets and the French Revolution, The Sociological Novel in England in the Middle Nineteenth Century, The Influence of Science on the English Novel and on English Thought, Socialism and the Evolution of Contemporary England.*

More numerous are the monographs which have for subject Renaissance writers, for instance John Lyly, Ben Jonson, Milton or Herrick; or writers of the classical period, such as Locke, De Foe, Swift, James Thomson, Edward Young, Horace Walpole, Wesley or Sterne; or Pre-Romantics like Cowper, Crabbe and Burns; or Romantics properly so called—Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Charles Lamb, or the so different Jane Austen and Sydney Smith; or again the moderns—Ruskin, Meredith, Thomas Hardy.

To these works, which go deep, cover their whole subject, derive from sources directly and often reveal new evidence or a new interpretation, which are erudite and yet aspire to a public beyond the initiate, English criticism has not been niggardly of approval. It has immediately admitted several of them to rank in their own sphere as classics, if the term may so be used, and has demanded and insisted that they be translated into English.

Our list has dealt only with the theses, the immediate fruits of academic labour. It might well have included the works which the same authors have written freely, and also those individual books of wider reputation to which the British public have finely rendered homage, Taine's work in a former day and now those of J. J. Jusserand and André Chevrillon.

The work now presented to the British public was thus born in a propitious atmosphere. It is no summary of the studies enumerated above, for it aspires to more than the mere noting of results obtained in France. It cannot therefore be said merely to focus the conclusions of earlier monographs. In its defects and its qualities it claims entire independence. Undoubtedly, however, its birth was encouraged by the ardent curiosity and sympathy which its subject aroused in France, and also, to a high degree, by the feeling that England herself looked favourably on French efforts to understand her mentality and interpret her literature.

E. L. L. C.

The division of the book into two parts, the first dealing with origins, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the second with the modern and contemporary periods, entails obvious differences of presentment and even of method. It would be vain to deny that they are partly due to the different habits of thought of the two authors. Yet even had the whole book been written by one man, he would have been led, almost inevitably, to pursue a different method in treating of the past and of the present.

To pass on from the study of mediæval and Renaissance literature, to that of modern times (1660–1914), is to meet with lighter difficulties in some respects, and heavier in others. So many conditions of the problem are new, that the very nature of the task is no longer the same. The case here is not one of superabundant authorities, but of scattered and insufficient guidance. On many points, and more and more as one proceeds, the necessary spadework is still wanting. While the matter to be dealt with is really, within a shorter compass of time, much more plentiful, fewer attempts have been made to survey and clarify it. Even the division into periods is far from being agreed upon. It was therefore inevitable, if some sort of order was to be evolved, that much should be ventured, as much indeed remained to be done.

Under these circumstances, the author has been anxious to select the most efficient principle for a classification. Warned by the example of Taine—a critic of genius, steeped in the spirit of a dogmatic philosophy—he has not sought to deduce the course of English literature from any number of exterior influences. Such a scheme of rigorous determination is no longer conceivable. However, the day has come, it seems, when the broad facts of literary history can be more closely connected not merely with physical or social agents, but with a moral one—namely, the development of the national mind itself. That a relation of this kind obtains always more or less, is admitted on all hands; but no explanatory ordering of the data could be thought of, so long as no definite elements were shown to reappear, in at least analogous forms, at the various stages of the psychological process. It is now possible to reckon with such elements, and to speak of recurrences in literature. The more searching analysis which has been effected of the movements in intellectual history, has brought out certain correspondences between equivalent terms. Those words, classicism, romanticism, and so forth, are seen to answer to distinct attitudes of the mind; and the transitions from one period to another show themselves as governed by a law of rhythmic change, the sway of which extends to most moral transformations.

From this point of view, it has proved possible to regard two centuries and a half of English literature as a succession of moments in the history of the English mind, each stage of which obeyed a craving for novelty and contrast, while consciously or unconsciously preserving the accumulated capital of all previous experiences. Such, in fact, is the normal development of that collective personality, a nation. That the national mind of England should have reached full growth at the time of the Renaissance, made it easier to apply this method throughout the centuries of maturity that followed the age of Elizabeth.

The working out of this principle has allowed modern English literature to be presented in some sort of genetic order, and divided into periods, each of which really corresponds with a broad phase in the moral history of England; and with her social history as well, in so far as the facts of society and those of intellectual life offer a natural harmony. In consequence, not only has the field of literature been extended so as to include philosophy, theology, and the wider results of the sciences, whenever the expressions given them had awakened general interest; but the chapters within each period have been arranged so as to answer in principle, not the customary distinction between literary kinds, based on form, but the diverse aspects in the creative activities of writers, and thus the various psychological attitudes which these activities imply. The traditional separation between prose and poetry has therefore had very often to be ignored.

Although this method makes large demands upon the attention of the reader, and involves the upsetting of not a few cherished habits, the price to pay is perhaps not too high, when balanced with the facilities which our desire not only to remember, but to understand, may find in an orderly view of a vast number of facts. It is the author's hope that the disadvantages inseparable from such an effort may not be deemed so heavy as to condemn his attempt altogether.

Whatever its further aim may be, a history of literature must before all deal properly with writers who, if interesting, are more or less original; and with periods which, however similar to others, are more or less unique. No attempt to classify tendencies and works, and explain the common elements in them, would be in the present case tolerable, unless it allowed free scope to the direct, unhampered study of ages, men and artists. Earnest care has been taken here not to over-stress the general at the expense of the particular. While a regular recurrence, with gradually shortening beats of the rhythm, is emphasized all through, no pains have been spared to throw light on the proper features of each period, the infusion of the present with an ever richer past producing results which are really ever new. Again, the individual temperaments of the authors have received the utmost attention, and the qualities of their art and language have been given the fullest consideration which the narrow limits of this study would allow.

Indeed, excessive compression, due to lack of space, is the greatest difficulty under which this part of the work has laboured. For not only is the volume of literary output larger in the modern period; the interrelation of literature with an increasingly complex moral and social life is itself growing more complex. The result is that many and cruel sacrifices have had to be made. No quotation could be thought of. Even the greatest writers have been studied on a reduced scale. All that concerns the lives and careers of authors has had, almost without exception, to be transferred to the corresponding footnotes, each of which aims at being in brief a biographical and bibliographical summary.

It needs hardly be added that the study of the most recent period has proved extremely arduous, for obvious reasons; and that this portion of the survey can only be regarded as especially tentative. Though the chronological limit fixed upon is 1914, the progress of literature has been partly sketched until the after-war years.

The lists of authorities recommended for general consultation, at the end of each chapter, and those which refer to each writer in particular, have been drawn up with a view, not to research work, but to the needs of the French student or cultivated reader, who wished to become better acquainted with a subject. That French books, merit being equal, should have been mentioned rather than foreign, as more accessible, was in such conditions unavoidable. Still, no other conscious discrimination has been used in their favour; and among the works quoted, those written in English, as would be expected, are far more numerous than those in all other languages put together. Despite the fact that these lists have been left as they stood, it is hoped that they may be found fair and of possible use in Great Britain or America. Owing to the delay incurred in the writing of this translation, these short bibliographies, unfortunately, are no longer up to date. Speaking generally, books published after 1923 could not be taken into account. Should the occasion arise for a new edition, this deficiency might be corrected.

The obligations incurred to such comprehensive works as *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, Sir Leslie Stephen's *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, Oliver Elton's *Survey of English Literature, 1780–1830* and *1830-1880*, H. Walker's *Literature of the Victorian Era*, etc., have been acknowledged more than once; but that a debt of gratitude to these works and many others should remain unrecognized, goes without saying. The author avails himself of this opportunity to make a general apology to the scholars and critics whose exertions and learning have rendered this modest attempt at a synthesis possible, without due appreciation of their help being expressed in every case.

L. C.

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A HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

BOOK I

LITERATURE OF THE RESTORATION (1660–1702)

CHAPTER I

SOURCES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEW LITERATURE

1. The historical significance of the Restoration with reference to the past and future.—From the political point of view the modern development of the English people dates from 1688, but in the moral and literary order the date is 1660. The Restoration of King Charles II. marks the decisive birth of the new world.

Whatever innovations may have been introduced by the Puritan Republic, from this point of view it formed an integral part of the past. Stern daughter of the Reformation, it nevertheless continued and completed the Renaissance; it was the last of a series of great national experiments in which was expended a moral liberty that had been but recently acquired. The Elizabethan age had pursued its manifold desire for world conquest; it had experienced the thirst for the knowledge of antiquity, the taste for adventure, the love of the beautiful, the impassioned expression of self. The conflict between personal religion and ecclesiastical tradition, meanwhile, was a quickening force in the realm of spiritual ardour. Sectarian strife had mingled with the triumphs of national independence, and with the flourishing of art and literature. The forces thus liberated, and the fervent zeal in matters of religion, would give birth in turn to an ideal that aimed at organising life according to divine laws; and the Commonwealth, this compound of mystic and social aspirations, represents the vain striving, along the avenue of inspired thought, for an equilibrium, the experimental conditions of which were thenceforth to become more clear.

After this period of feverish activity, and under the exhaustion that follows in its train, the vigour of the nation lapses into a state of temporary torpor; for the space of some thirty more years, it has to undergo the trials of an absolute régime. The constitution of parliamentary England, and the laws governing its progress, will only be definitively fixed with the fall of the Stuart dynasty. But already the ruin of the biblical absolutism of the "Saints" had restored to their normal functions instincts of liberty which sooner or later were to bring about the freedom of English politics. From now onwards, the era of too lofty ambitions and of juvenile errors is closed. The stamp of disillusionment, as that of reflection, is everywhere visible in the thought, the ideas, and the manners of the Restoration. Empiricism, in which is summed up the most characteristic genius of the English people, becomes the conscious law governing its existence.

In order to situate the Restoration, and link it up with a whole, there is thus no hesitating between the future and the past. It is a period which determines itself with relation to that which precedes it, and therefore might seem to be inseparable from it altogether; and so it is, in so far as political reaction is the outcome of action. But in all other respects, it is towards the future that it tends. Although a last upheaval will be necessary to annul the recurring offensives of unlimited monarchy, all activities in the realm of thought enter, with the Restoration, into the cycle of their regular movement, free henceforth from all extreme accidental happenings. A new society and a new literature begin in 1660.

2. **The new mental outlook.**—If 1660 as a year assumes a greater importance than 1688, it is due to the fact that the deeper life of the mind is a more decisive cause, or a more essential aspect, of the evolution of the race, than are the stages which mark the progress of political history. The Restoration coincides with one of the most notable changes in the inner being of the English soul.

It is customary, in order to explain the main inflexion of modern English literary history, to show, first of all, that at this point in its curve, the government, the social life, and the manners, are undergoing a process of transformation; so that the change in the æsthetic tone of the period corresponds with that effected in the domain of outward reality. It is, however, more correct, if one wishes to respect the real order of things, to follow the opposite course. For a considerable number of years an oscillation both in thought and in taste had been slowly preparing; the Restoration sees it take place, and on a big scale. This is certainly no chance conjunction, but it would be risky to deduce, so to speak, one of the two terms—whichever it be—from the other. We can only affirm that if the character of the new age reveals itself boldly and in a way that is strikingly manifest, it is because the circumstances of the time are wholly favourable to the spontaneous development of the moral rhythm.

From the earliest days of the Elizabethan period, English literature had depended for its sustenance on the passionate life of imagination. It was an epoch when even intellectual inquiry was stirred by the rapture of sense and feeling; in other words, it represented a rich flowering of romantic inspiration. Already at the beginning of the seventeenth century a certain fatigue was manifesting itself as a result of all this feverish activity. From 1600 to 1660 there is a gradual change in the tone of the literature as well as in the temperament of writers. On the one hand, thought becomes more exacting, more laboured; on the other, the search for emotion is now more complicated or overstrung; and an intellectuality as clear as it is cold mingles more and more oddly with the capricious strivings of imagination. The last works of Shakespeare, and those of his continuators; the subtly imaginative analyses of Bacon; the poems of Donne, then those of the metaphysical school, had all revealed the secret working of the mind of the age. In spite of the names that continue to add lustre to Elizabethan literature even in its closing years, we find it languishing and dying because the inner resources that had fed it are now exhausted; and in its decadence there is recognisable the embryo of the literature of reason which must of necessity replace it.

The new instinctive desire is for order and balance in measure; that is to say, what was wanted in art was an intellectual quality, because the intellect alone is the chief factor in orderly arrangement and simple clearness. The literary transition from the Renaissance to the Restoration is nothing more or less than the progressive movement of a spirit of liberty, at once fanciful, brilliant and adventurous, towards a rule and a discipline both in inspiration and in form. Long before 1660, the verse of Waller and Denham shows, in its movement and equal swing, how great was the desire for a music that was regular and cadenced, where the echoing of the rhymes continually reassured and strengthened the perception of order. From then onwards, classicism becomes the pole which attracts the hidden working of individual minds.

When once the "reign of Saints" terminates in indifference, weariness, or wrath, an unbearable and artificially prolonged tension of wills, sustained by the religious and mystical exaltation of feeling, gives way abruptly under the stress of a sudden conviction, just as it gives way to superior force. Reason, good sense, and the practicality of a people held in check for twenty years, break down the weakened dyke of Puritan tyranny; and with the fall of the Republic, there sweeps over the country a wave of scorn and hate for all the zeal, the straitlacedness of conscience, the sentimental aspect of piety, the cheat of a hollow spiritual and secular hierarchy. A great and decisive moral experience, underlying the political revolution of 1660, brings to completion the obscure working of thought that has been developing slowly for half a century. The nation as a whole, in its strong desire to live, gives itself over to ways of thinking and modes of life towards which its imperious instinct had already inclined it. The moral rhythm which had long been preparing and incipient, finally frees itself in 1660, and with its irresistible swing carries England towards an era of sovereign rationality.

3. The Monarchy and Manners.—The new régime establishes itself for the benefit of a reconstituted hierarchy, while social relationships are determined by the idea of authority and privilege. The king is too indolent, too fond of pleasure to endow his personal government with any reliable and systematic strength. Around him, the aristocracy of birth resumes its privileged place; a court is organised; preferments and positions are distributed as the master pleases. After the threats of a democracy based on equality and communistic in outlook, which the agitation of the Commonwealth had in a dim way contained, all those whose interest it is to have a stable order of things now joyfully hail the re-establishment of that order, whether in actual fact or official fiction. Whitehall becomes the centre of officialdom and elegant life, throwing Westminster and Parliament quite into the shade. The brilliance of this focus is reflected in the nearest circles of society; the "town," that is to say fashionable London, prides itself upon the near presence of the sovereign, and acquires the courtier tone. Provincial England, remote and hidden away, does not participate in the brilliant life of this little closed world, save through the slow currents of circulation, either of men, of money, or of news. Everything favours the constitution of an aristocratic literature.

The instinctive seeking after balance encourages the introduction of method in the realm of thought. Social influences are most decidedly favourable to the tendencies of literary taste. Rationality is the natural ally of order. It presupposes a certain choice, an analysis, a reflective turn of mind, which can be indulged in especially by those in the easier walks of higher life; at the same time it supposes a clear and disciplined habit of attention, rendered possible by culture and an atmosphere of calm. In a nation where the most naturally creative impulses have found utterance in an instinctive romanticism, classicism will be the outcome of a voluntary reaction, of a doctrine that has to be learnt, of a more or less artificial effort. Restoration society creates the atmosphere of refinement, or rather of exclusiveness, where an art can exist and flourish that is sustained, so to speak, by the inbred persuasion of its own superiority over popular forms of expression, as well as over the primitive and uncouth inventions of national genius.

At Court, and in the social circles of which it is the centre, there reigns a tone of moral dryness and scepticism. The foundations of public law can no longer boast of tradition or mystery; too many upheavals have already shaken the prestige of the throne; while the Restoration of Charles II., despite the formal pomp it brings with it, and the ephemeral popularity of the king, is but a kind of fictitious reconstruction of royalty by divine right. Its main stay with the public is a political wisdom in which resignation has a share. The English nation, worn out by strife and by uncertainties, then surrenders itself to an absolutism that it hopes is limited. The nobles are now able to recover their prestige, their sinecures; the middle class, a calm so indispensable to its business concerns. The idea of public utility is at the bottom of this accord, an implicit contract indeed, the violation of which will at a later date bring about the fall of the Stuart dynasty. Utilitarianism becomes the more conscious guide of individual actions. In opposition to a mysticism that is exhausted, corrupted by its inner wear, and changed into hypocrisy, the new régime re-establishes the supremacy of clear and cold experience; and the memory of all the lies and vain pretensions, so long endured, sharpens into an ironical mood the inner sense of this return to reality. A society devoid of all illusion sets about reconstructing itself on the unseemly ruins of a theocracy, and will no longer recognise any guide save intelligence.

The Puritans banned pleasure; the Restoration reinstates it in all its rights, and its new-found liberty develops at once into licentiousness. Public festivals are re-established, popular entertainments authorised, and the theatres are reopened. Manners are allowed to slip into the toleration of vice, and almost its encouragement. Against the painful, useless effort of official sanctity, we have the reaction of what is really the taste and instinct of the time. The atmosphere of violent and often coarse voluptuousness in which the Court and the fashionable world are equally bathed, is intimately and secretly in accord with the arid tone and lucid outlook of the mental life of the day. The rational character of all artistic inspiration is supported by the dearth of any great enthusiasm, by a constant pursuit of pleasure and utility, which gives itself to be an enlightened quest.

The Elizabethan age had been an outburst of initiative and a fresh welling up of life; the Restoration, emerging from the restraint exercised by the Republic over all instinct, shows neither the same wealth nor the same vigour. Only in the outbreak of passion and sensual joy is there any enthusiasm; in everything else, it is as if the sap of the nation's life were impoverished. This is a misleading appearance, yet one that answers to a deep reality, a phase of critical thought rather than of action. The withering up, on the other hand, has a positive aspect, the progress in every direction of the spirit of rational research. The desire to judge and classify human values, to explore and organise the physical world, increases and expresses itself with an independence at least relative; literature and science benefit from the freedom allowed in matters of conduct. Writers grow conscious of the authority of rules, and are occupied in the task of trying to frame them; the art of writing is the object of many a learned treatise. It now becomes an exercise of methodical and deliberate taste, to appreciate a book at its proper value. At the same time, moral and political philosophy sets out to formulate a more precise code of laws; the study of the human understanding is being boldly tackled; and the spirit of inquiry, freed from the sense of any impious purpose, begins to probe the secrets of nature. If the founding of the Royal Society is a sign, the importance of which cannot be too highly rated, it is because it corresponds with a widespread desire for knowledge, shared in by almost all the active minds of the time.

4. **French Influence.**—Thus the outstanding characteristics of the new age are explained by the remarkable precision with which social circumstances accentuate the spontaneous bents of souls. But one may wonder whether there are not in the intellectual physiognomy of the Restoration, certain traits which come, as it were, entirely from without, and which are only the result of circumstances. Might not the influence of France be purely an accident in history?

It is not an accident. It had been prepared, in the first place, by the more frequent intercourse that had taken place between the two countries and the two Courts, since the fourth decade of the seventeenth century. The choice by which France became the refuge for those banished after the Civil War, has a much deeper significance than can be explained by the mere convenience of that country's proximity to England; it arises from a strong affinity, and one that continues to develop, between French civilisation on the one hand and the very essence of monarchical culture on the other; with the result that the restored Stuart dynasty brought back of necessity with it the sense of the prestige of the French monarchy. If the exiles of the Commonwealth period—and with the courtiers of Charles II. were many of the writers of his reign—imbibed in France, or believed they had imbibed, the spirit of the nation's manners and literature, it was because they felt the attraction of a great reign that had already begun, of a national flowering that was already in full bloom. But neither geography, nor political and social history, can account for the force and extent of this influence. At an earlier date than in England, and in a more definite way, the moral development in France tended towards a phase of sovereign rationality; and when once this ideal had grown clear and become, as it were, a beacon light on the horizon of thought, it anticipated and guided the secret desire of instincts that were feeling their way. And the way which they found thus was none other than that to which they had spontaneously turned. The ground was now ready to receive the seed of the French influence. This was fruitful, in so far as it brought into play scattered or precise affinities.

This is not the place in which to enumerate the various forms of this influence. It spread from the Court and the fashionable circles of the capital to the most cultivated class in the provinces; it left its strong mark upon fashions and manners, the superficial sides of life; it even penetrated to modes of feeling and thinking, and through the language, as well as through the authority of precepts and æsthetic examples, it fashioned or rather taught and encouraged certain habits and preferences of taste. As soon as one goes into details, the number of imitations, borrowings, and reminiscences, is very abundant; and the study of many a writer would be incomplete, if this influence were left out of account. But it is through their diffuse effect, through the creation of an atmosphere, that French literature and life have had their most subtle, most real, influence. In English letters and art, the tone of the epoch is made up of national sound-vibrations, with an intermingling of foreign notes. Among the latter can be distinguished that of Spain, the theatre of which, for example, was not without some action. But that of France is distinct and superior enough to impregnate the very quality of the harmony. The development of poetry, especially, bears the traces of this essential and, in certain respects, dominant suggestion. The character and rhythm of the English classical line are fixed, so to speak, by the authority of an inner choice, which in its turn is prompted, accentuated and even controlled by the cadence of French verse.

5. Writers and the social surroundings.—In order to complete the sketch of the frame in which Restoration literature develops, a place must be reserved for the social condition of the writer.

This has been recognised as one of the characteristic features of the period, and has served to supply a contrast with that which follows. The opposition thus established is exact, though it would be wrong to imply that, as from the future, the Restoration differs in this respect from the past. The Elizabethan age had not as yet organised, according to definite standards, the life of those who provided its intellectual pleasures. The comparatively easy career of Shakespeare, as an actor and poet who had risen from humble circumstances, ought not to blind us to the fact of the suffering and struggles of so many of his contemporary writers. Literature at that date, despite the rich contribution of new blood, on the whole saw the continuation of the privilege which men of birth or wealth had possessed before. But with the Restoration the conflict becomes more acute between the regulations governing social life, and the demands of free literary creation; because it strengthens for a time the oligarchic character of society; because it confines more rigorously to one class the authority in matters of taste; and also because it withers up and cramps the very idea of artistic values.

The result is that until the end of the seventeenth century certain categories of writers enjoy, in comparison with others, facilities that are abnormally superior. The noblemen of old or recent family standing make it a point of pride to write, and everything tends to encourage them: the complicity of public opinion, the tone of Court life, the character of the king, and his superficial regard for the activities of mind. The Cavalier generation which in 1660 reacquires a prestige that time has severely shaken, justifies its ascendency by something else than its prowess in love and gallantry; it has had much talent to display during the years of exile, and when these are ended it still has much to show, although not always quite so much. This self-confidence, which the events of the time encouraged and helped, explains the number of its efforts in literature, and, in fact, also goes to explain, most often, their at least relative success. Never has a man's birth appeared so much to imply a gift for writing.

Nevertheless, there is an increasing number of writers being recruited from among the ranks of the middle or lower bourgeoisie, and even from among the people. A certain spreading of culture is already beginning to penetrate to the lower levels of national life, and fewer faculties are sterilised by ignorance. But the men of letters who are without social standing or fortune, cannot live by their pen; the printing, publishing and selling of books are not controlled or protected by commercial customs or laws; the idea of property in art has not yet been conceived; lastly, the reading public has not yet been formed. Each writer chooses a patron, either permanent or temporary; he flatters him, dedicates his writings to him, celebrates the events of his family life, and in return is the recipient of gifts and alms. In that struggle for existence, there is left so large a margin to the caprices of chance, that the victims are numerous; and among these must be counted, not only mediocre writers of all kinds, but also authors whose talent is of the best.

6. Themes of the New Literature.—It is under these diverse influences of the moral as well as of the social surroundings that the literature of the Restoration takes its rise. Many links connect it with that of the preceding age; no more here than elsewhere can it be said that there is evidence of an absolute cleavage. We have the same men writing before, and after 1660; those who have waited for the return of the king in order to write, have breathed the air of the Republic; those who preferred exile have not only been influenced by foreign modes of living, but in the coteries of the emigration have felt the radiation of an ideal of elegance and spiritual preciosity, in which survived the very soul of the Renaissance in its declining phase. Despite the gap represented by the Republic, it is not only in an official and fictitious sense that Charles II. succeeds Charles I. In a deeper plane, the initial stages of a literary evolution had already unfolded themselves, announcing and preparing for the new age; themes had been sketched out, innovations attempted in form; so that neither in their inspiration nor in their art or language do writers after 1660 differ radically from their predecessors. Overlapping this date on either side, certain schools develop, just as others die out. Lastly, the apparent break with the moral past conceals the working of a need for psychological renovation which, through the permanent action of one and the same motive power, constitutes the solidarity of periods, just as it produces their diversity.

But rarely has a literature found itself more openly in reaction against the general spirit of that which preceded it. In the light of a rational ideal become conscious, the Restoration judges the English Renaissance, and finds itself, for many reasons, frankly superior. It is elsewhere that it looks for its models: in the classics of antiquity, or in those of contemporary France. It adores Beaumont and Fletcher, venerates Ben Jonson, and is not devoid of a certain admiration for Shakespeare, although grieving at the latter's defects. But the development of the national literature since the Middle Ages seems to be in the eyes of the Restoration a slow progress towards a maturity of form, of which it itself is at last the happy herald.

What are the moral forces that can vitalise this literature? The newly restored régime pretends to bring with it the gift of order to society, and that of peace to men. Very soon there will rise against it a feeling of violent opposition; but the years in which the tone of the Restoration first reveals itself are years of political tranquillity. The artificiality of cultivated manners tends to alienate all thought from the preoccupation of the concrete, and from any suggestion of popular sentiment. A sort of detachment inveigles literature away from what is practical, just as from what is subjective and sentimental. Indeed, until the time when the strife of rival factions will again become active, there is little else save the passionate pursuit of matters intellectual to animate the creative impulses of writers; and even then, it will be little else than mere party or sectarian zeal.

A central and relatively simple quality of rationality is therefore refracted, according to the various temperaments and circumstances, either along the lines of analytical and descriptive research, going from science to realism; or in the criticism, more or less serious, of human acts and motives, where it runs from parody and comedy to satire. Analysis and reasoning, realism, criticism, comedy and satire: such are the main features of literary activity during the Restoration. There it is that this activity is seen, not only at its best, but also in its most significant light.

In the forms of pure sensibility, of ardent and tragic passion, of creative imagination; in lyricism, in drama, in epic and allegorical verse, the Restoration, certainly, can show many tentative efforts. In these kinds it often achieves creditable success, and certain individual temperaments even come to shine in them brilliantly. But the distinctive life of this literature is not there; and one feels that these modes of expression are not suited to its genius.

Art, however, often takes refuge in the exceptional. What place must we grant to a Milton and a Bunyan in the years that follow 1660?

7. Thwarted Tendencies.—From 1660 to 1688, two literary currents are flowing at different depths, without merging the one into the other. The first, by far the greater, spreads itself out in the sunshine; it represents the tendencies, the works, that are in intimate harmony with the spirit of the epoch, and alone truly belongs to it. The second appears on the surface at long intervals only; it continues the past, and announces the future. Judged by the inspiration which animates it, and by the spiritual characteristics of which it is the expression, it is in flagrant contradiction with the physiognomy of the age. It corresponds to the moral needs of a whole variety, and the most common, perhaps, of the national temperament; a variety that is being eclipsed, but at the same time has not ceased to be.

The greatest work in English literature during the reign of Charles II. is, undoubtedly, the *Paradise Lost* of Milton; and this poem, as imposing as it is solitary, is foreign to the movement surrounding it. In the same way, the *Pilgrim's Progress* of Bunyan seems to belong to another world. And if Milton has to be regarded as a survivor of the preceding age, Bunyan, by the circumstances of his life, cannot be separated from the years in which he suffered for his religious beliefs. He belongs, indeed, to the half-century when mysticism is repressed into the inner sphere of dreams.

Works such as these, and others which resemble them, can no doubt be explained as the inevitable exceptions to the standards set up by every generalisation in history; and one is able to see in them, despite their æsthetic value which is often eminent, examples of those irregular and erratic facts, which set up, round the well-ordered domains of human development, the salutary margin where the complexity of things moral still reigns supreme.

However, the psychological interpretation of literary facts has to go farther. That a personality such as Milton's, formed for a number of years, and nurtured by other influences, in another atmosphere, should preserve the tone of its individual self after the world to which it belongs has disappeared, and that *Paradise Lost* should appear during the sceptical and dissolute reign of Charles II., is undoubtedly little else than what one might call a normal paradox. But in addition to obviously belated writers, such as the blind poet, the Restoration contains an appreciable quantity of literary expressions irreducible to the dominant forces at work in the epoch. Veins of moral dissidence traverse the very substance of its structure. This and that accent, this and that outburst of inspiration reveal a quality of soul, a spontaneous manner of thinking and feeling, that is quite out of harmony with the tone now tyrannically imposing itself everywhere; and this lode as it were runs through the whole period. It can be easily recognised in the personality and the work of the writer who dominates, and who is the best representative of these times, John Dryden.

Strictly speaking, therefore, one must only attribute quite a relative value to the standards by which the character of each age defines itself. In so far as each of these excludes contrary characteristics, it is subject to countless exceptions; and these exceptions themselves come within the normal rule, for they are in keeping with the true life of the spirit. Inner development consists in a progressive enrichment; each phase transforms the preceding one and adds something to it, but transforms it in such a way as not to destroy it. In spite of the decisive manner in which it breaks with the past, the Restoration is unable to forget the Renaissance. Not only does it preserve in its innermost self this subconscious remembrance, but it also possesses the other's creative faculties in a latent state, inhibited but always ready to reawaken; and under one form or another, through the artistic expressions of the moment, this secret quality allows itself to be seen or divined; it shows through here and there; it awakens, more pronounced, more intense in such and such an individual mind; briefly, it continues to exist; and the chapter of isolated writers, as in all the epochs of a literary rhythm henceforth fully constituted, is that in which are best seen the essential continuity, the reciprocal penetration, of the states and moments of collective consciousness.

8. Political Unrest: 1688 and the Transition in Literature.—The study of the literature of the last forty years of the seventeenth century has to take into account, besides the Restoration itself, two main groups of historical circumstances. The one is the gradual reappearance of political strife between 1670 and 1685, and the birth of a spirit of opposition that is hostile to the projects of the court; the other is formed by the Revolution of 1688, the setting up of a new régime, and the diverse signs of a reaction in public opinion against the manners and special modes of the Restoration.

These two groups of facts follow each other, and are in a direct line the one with the other. The first sketches a revolt of national instinct against the absolutism and Catholic leanings of the Stuarts; the second accomplishes and develops the triumph of this revolt. The elements of distinctly moral nature which are interfused, after 1688, with the political motives, are already perceptible in germ about 1678, in the opposition of the "country party."

From the literary point of view, these deep and vigorous movements of the national mind bring about certain progressive changes in the inner quality of the Restoration. With the revival of factions and parties, and the excitement caused by the Popish Plot, a quality of force and ardour revives in civic feeling, and passes naturally into the expressions of such feeling; so that the tone of literature, as of social life, is somewhat modified. With the political and moral transformation that begins in 1688, the very keynote of English literature, as of English life, is changed. It can be said that the last years of the century form a distinct period; a brief but well-marked transition, separating the Restoration from the age of classicism.

There is some advantage in studying this transition by itself. On the contrary, the new tremors, keener and deeper, which since the reign of Charles II. disturb the passive frivolity of the Restoration, have no literary influence independent enough to call for separate study. They only supply certain useful elements in the individual explanation of the "dissenters" in this literature.

Thus the Restoration is entirely open to the future. Neither artistically nor psychologically does it suffice unto itself. It inaugurates modes of consciousness at once simple and clear, but cannot exclude different ways of feeling; it tends, as if in the throes of some internal uneasiness, some secret feeling of unrest, to a more balanced realisation of itself, to a more harmonious order, which will be seen in the more developed forms of classicism.

To be consulted: Barrett Wendell, *The Temper of the Seventeenth Century in Literature,* 1904; Beljame, *Le Public et les Hommes de Lettres en Angleterre, etc.* (1660–1744), second ed., 1897; Cazamian, *L'Evolution psychologique et la Littérature en Angleterre* (1660–1914), 1920; Charlanne, *L'Influence française en Angleterre au xvii^e^ siècle,* 1906; Courthope, *History of English Poetry,* vols. iii. and iv., 1903; Elton, *The Augustan Ages,* 1899; Garnett, *The Age of Dryden,* 1895; Gosse, *From Shakespeare to Pope,* 1885; idem, *History of Eighteenth-Century Literature,* 1889; Stone, *England under the Restoration,* 1923; Taine, *Littérature anglaise,* vol. iii., 1866; Upham, *French Influence in English Literature from Elizabeth to the Restoration,* 1908.

CHAPTER II

DRYDEN AND LYRICAL POETRY

1. Dryden: the Man and his Career.—The study of Restoration literature must begin with the poetry. This traditional order is here incontestably justified: form now comes into the foreground of the art of writing, and it is in poetry that the elaboration of form is carried farthest. In this domain the new tendencies are soonest in evidence, and have the clearest perception of their objects. Besides, the outstanding figure of this age is that of a man whose versatile genius has essayed its skill in many kinds of literature, but who is first and foremost a poet. Dryden,[1] by his example and precepts, has exercised the widest influence; he has furnished the models, as well as the doctrine, of a more careful art, in which the technique of verse is an essential element.

His personality, robust and yet mobile, somewhat difficult to grasp, is better explained in connection with the changing background of his life. The national character in him is strikingly apparent. He was born in the heart of England, of a family which had come from the north, and which for centuries had taken its place in the most central, the most typical of the English classes, the rural gentry. The hereditary title of baronet which it possessed, however, must not give rise to confusion; Dryden never belonged to the nobility. In the civil and religious struggles of the day, the sympathies of his family were with the Parliamentarians. The outcome of these distant influences he developed according to his own law. His poetic vocation seems to have been neither very early, nor very eager, until the moment of the Restoration—he was then approaching the thirties. He had made the death of Cromwell the subject of a funeral oration; he penned a triumphal hymn in celebration of the king's return; and from henceforth all his feelings and his acts show plainly enough that his royalist convictions were the true expression of his nature.

His life was that of a man of letters, still anxious to win the favour of the great, but assured of a dignity of his own, and on the way towards independence. Poetry, even in the form of circumstantial verse, is an uncertain source of income; the theatres, which had again opened their doors, offered a more rapid career to writers of talent; the stage attracted Dryden, and for fifteen years he was the most fertile of dramatists. Married in 1663 to the daughter of the Duke of Berkshire, he became Poet Laureate in 1668, and later Royal Historiographer. A personal connection with the aristocracy, the support of the sovereign, and lastly success, seemed to vouchsafe for him a brilliant social position.

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[1] John Dryden, born in 1631 in Northamptonshire, studied at Westminster School and Cambridge, and settled in London. In 1659 he published *A Poem upon the Death of His Late Highness Oliver, etc.;* in 1660, the year of the Restoration, *Astræa Redux;* in 1666, immediately after the Fire of London, *Annus Mirabilis, or the Year of Wonders.* In 1663 he opened his dramatic career with a comedy, *The Wild Gallant* (see below, chap. iv.). His very varied attempts as a playwright led him to define his ideas on the theatre in a number of prologues, epilogues, essays, etc. (see further, and chap. iv.). He helped the cause of the Court in a series of political satires: *Absalom and Achitophel* (first part, 1681; second part, by Tate and Dryden, 1682); *The Medal* and *MacFlecknoe,* 1682 (see below, chap. iii.). Two didactic poems reveal his religious ideas: *Religio Laici,* 1682; *The Hind and the Panther,* 1687. His conversion to Roman Catholicism and the Revolution of 1688 resulted in his losing several posts, and the last years of his life were not without hardship. He translated ancient writers (such as Homer, Vergil, Juvenal, Persius, Ovid and Lucretius), adapted Chaucer, Boccaccio, etc., and thus gleaned material for his poetic *Miscellanies* of 1684, 1685, 1693, 1694, and *Fables* of 1700, which also contained lyrical pieces: *Threnodia Augustalis,* 1685; *To the Pious Memory of . . . Mrs. Anne Killigrew,* 1686; *A Song for St. Cecilia's Day,* 1687; *Britannia Rediviva,* 1688; *Alexander's Feast,* 1697. He died in 1700. His work, very varied, has other side-items.—*Works,* ed. by W. Scott, revised by Saintsbury, 1882; *Poetical Works,* ed. by Christie, 1870; ed. by Sergeaunt, 1910; *Select Poems,* ed. by Christie and Firth, 1893; *Satires,* ed. by Collins, 1893; *Essays,* ed. by Ker, 1900; *Essay of Dramatic Poesy,* ed. by Arnold, 1903. See biographies or studies by Scott; Beljame (thesis), 1881; Saintsbury (English Men of Letters), 1881; Garnett (*Age of Dryden*), 1907; Verrall (*Lectures on Dryden*), 1914; Van Doren (*The Poetry of J. Dryden*), 1920; Allardyce Nicoll (*Dryden and His Poetry*), 1923.

And such he enjoyed for several years, despite certain incidents. A poet of high rank, Buckingham, mocked at him disdainfully on the stage (*The Rehearsal,* 1671); another, Rochester, appears to have been the instigator of an ambuscade, in which he was cudgelled. The moment came, however, when the opportunity to play a part in politics was offered to him. The agitation caused by the Popish Plot, shortly before 1680, in the course of the troubled years which gave rise to the appellations of Whig and Tory, and the growing opposition of public feeling to the succession of the Duke of York, the Catholic brother of the king, prompted Charles II. to enlist the help of the Poet Laureate. Whether or not the theme of *Absalom and Achitophel* was suggested by his royal master, Dryden brought all the vigour of an incomparable verve to the task; and if he did not succeed in prevailing upon the judges to condemn Shaftesbury, he carried satire to a supreme degree of masterly concentration.

This is the moment when the course of his life takes a sudden bend; and it is impossible not to trace the main cause to the awakening of a conscience, till then benumbed but not inert, to religious disquietude. Without having given any premonitory sign of such an impulse, he explains in verse the reasons which lead him to prefer the Anglican faith; some years later, he refutes his first thesis, and demonstrates at great length the superiority of Roman Catholicism. In the interval, a Catholic sovereign, James II., had mounted the throne. . . . Could the inner working of Dryden's thought have led him freely from one attitude to the other? Everything permits of such a supposition; the more so, when we consider that the Revolution of 1688, destroying as it did, with the absolutism of the Stuarts, the hopes of the nation's return to former belief, Dryden courageously puts up with the loss of his pension and of official favour, and resumes his literary tasks with true stoical dignity. His last years are among his most fruitful.

Dryden was buried in Westminster Abbey. Despite the reverses in fortune that had darkened his old age, his prestige remained intact; the Restoration had acclaimed him its greatest writer, and the new generation did not show him less respect. A party man, he had many friends among his contemporaries, just as he had enemies. Since then, he has been the object of sharp criticism; the frequent note of aggressive fervour in his opinions, his religious and political recantations, the often licentious liberty of his plays, have shocked various susceptibilities; his memory has been assailed, and has had to be defended.

One cannot be carried away by the current of his thought, or feel the spell of his virile generous personality, without being won over to an intimate persuasion of its human worth. One perceives therein a wealth of instincts that the will power has not always known how to discipline and harmonise; but the contradictions or rather the variations of this character clearly point back to an experience and a continuous development, the line of which has always been honestly chosen, if perhaps it has not been guided or drawn by a firm purpose. The attractiveness of this expansive and sincere nature, capable of keen resentment, but without any base ill-feeling, is seen to even greater advantage if compared with that of the writer who will succeed to his heritage: Pope, still more classical, and more artificial, with whom the conscience and scruple of the artist will be pushed even farther, but whose fund of natural tendencies will be wholly suffused with equivocal subtleties, and disturbing double-dealings.

2. His Temperament: its Mixed Elements.—A rich nature, gifted for easy creation, endowed with a sense of discipline and owing much to effort, but still more to a free and fruitful genius, such is the picture of himself left us by Dryden. In the march towards classicism he leads the vanguard, and arrives at what then seemed to be the promised land; but he does not penetrate very far into it, does not settle there permanently, as will those to whom other horizons are unknown. He is still, as it were, a traveller, hankering after the great free stretches of landscape, and preserving his independence of mind. We must, therefore, recognise in Dryden the last and the greatest of the transitional poets, who link up the Renaissance with the classical age.

No solid inference can be drawn from the fact that he was born as early as 1631, that he breathed for a long time the atmosphere of the Republic, and reached man's estate before the Restoration. Other writers, without being younger in years, will prove to be more exclusively adapted to the new age. One must, therefore, fall back upon the individual, the inexplicable in Dryden. In his temperament, Nature has laid the safest seeds of the literature of reason and order which is slowly evolving: the need for clarity, proportion and rule, the architectural instinct, the gift of logic, the demand for a definite rhythm, for a symmetrical and distinct cadence; he is of his time, and yet outpaces it, guiding it towards the future; he possesses the divining sense of the harmonious and sober construction which the art of writing has to build up on the ruins of a brilliant and undisciplined fancy. But by the side of these elements are different and even contrary impulses; survivals, reviviscences of the past, impetuous flights of the imagination, the love of vigour, be it at the expense of careful correctness, a faculty of concrete vision, a taste for full and sonorous melody, a weakness for rare, sudden, curious felicities in thought or phrase. Many of the distinctive characteristics of the Elizabethan poetry, and all the intellectual preciosity of the first half of the seventeenth century, are to be found again in the early Dryden; and if at a later date he overcomes his preciosity, and disowns his juvenile errors, he nevertheless retains in his blood the glow of an ardour that is vanishing from his generation. The mature art he creates for himself is not of the stripped and somewhat spare type, to which a perfected technique will tend; but rather of a still sturdy, robust and strong-lived quality. The psychological sources that nurture it are not exclusively intellectual.

There is evidence then of an evolution in his career. After his first errors, and as he gradually elaborates his art, Dryden is happily served by the models he has sought out for himself. He has a sincere and keen liking for a form that is pure, for the neat line, for the even balancing of a whole; he feels that the masterpieces of antiquity have these merits; he also perceives them in the writings of his French contemporaries; and no doubt these examples help him to shape out more clearly the very ideal that is only instinctively growing in his mind. In the school of the ancient and modern masters, he catches the desire and adopts the habit of a refinement in taste; and under their influence his verse, his lyricism and his dramatic art tend towards an orthodox classicism.

They were destined never to attain to it. With the full maturity of his years and of his talent, Dryden in fact shows a return to standards of greater freedom; a kind of national reaction against the slavery to foreign rules. While he has brought the typical verse form of the new poetry, the heroic couplet, to a high degree of perfection, he stops its progress short of the point beyond which the last margin of poetic licence, and the elements of variety that break the absolute regularity of the rhythm, would disappear. While he has written his plays in rhymes, he returns to blank verse. While he has extolled the unities as employed by the French, he justifies himself in not applying them rigorously. His prefaces and his essays affirm the rights of English originality; he upholds the legitimacy of employing comedy in drama, in accord with the traditional preference of the Elizabethans. He shows, to a greater extent than his contemporaries, the love for and understanding of Shakespeare, Spenser and Chaucer. After twenty years' apprenticeship, Dryden, in the fullness of his strength as of his talent, asserts the self-sufficiency of the type of art he has fashioned, and of which his greatest works are the illustration.

One might say that it is a mixed art; neither the pure classicism which Pope will endeavour to practise, nor the pseudo-classicism, tainted with decadent romanticism, which Dryden had practised in his early poems; but a strong blending, in which the essential elements of discipline and of an accepted rule combine with the sovereign ease and boldness of inspiration. That vigorous quality, that movement, that full sonorousness of the great satires, of the odes, and the best portions of *Aureng-Zebe* and *Don Sebastian,* are not only the happy successes of an exceptional talent; they are also the examples of an adapted but native art, wherein English poetry would have found, perhaps, the model of a national classicism. It is a style of compromise and of personal but legitimate synthesis, in which the soundest and truest liberties of the romanticists are grafted on to a general background of order and choice; a mongrel style, as has been said of its application to the theatre; but even there, the hybrid product has something to show for itself. It is an art that is aware, through a just intuition, of the relaxing and changes to which the doctrine of strict correctness must submit, in order to be likely to live in England.

Thus, younger than Milton, less extraordinarily robust and secure in his inner originality, and more touched by the spirit of the new times, Dryden none the less describes a somewhat similar curve. He also, when once he has mastered his art, has tended, in self-commanding wisdom, towards greater liberty. In a very different plane of feeling and of poetry, living in the world and not outside of it, he has attempted more modestly the same high reconciliation. The strong fusion of logic and creative imagination which characterises *Paradise Lost,* also constitutes at times, and probably in a lesser degree, the unique value of Dryden's work. His best achievements, in his plays, bring them fairly close to the imaginative, sober, nervous art of certain aspects of Shakespeare, as is shown in whole scenes of *Don Sebastian.*

This classicism, truly indigenous, made of a restrained and self-disciplined romanticism, called for gifts that are all too rare; and the movement of thought was carrying a period of reason towards the full, exclusive realisation of its type. Dryden's successors will believe that they are continuing his effort, but as a matter of fact they will relinquish it; they will disown all the past history of their literature; nor will they have the courage of their national originality. A whole century will have to elapse ere they regain it.

3. Early Poems: Apprenticeship.—The first poems of Dryden are interesting works. The promise of a great talent is revealed in them, from intentions, and a few actual features. But they are not decisive works. They show the faults of the past very plainly, and still more than those of the future.

Therefore, one must not read in them the triumph of the new school. These verses are devoid of any innovation; they continue a development that had then long been in progress, and that was scarcely to reach its completed stage until the publication, some twenty years later, of *Absalom and Achitophel.*

In most of these poems there is a frank display of extreme preciosity. The search for distinction, brilliancy, finesse, in a writer who will at a later date show so steady a taste, is almost fully employed in the inventing of "conceits." This disease of literature, already of long standing, is a crisis of thought, and is felt to be linked up with the efforts to grow, made by an intelligence whose ambition is thenceforward developing. The conquest of new provinces over the realm of the unconscious, such in these last years of the Renaissance, as always, is the progress of mind. And this progress is here realised through a clearer perception of shades, of the subtle differences between things. By establishing curious and far-fetched relations from one object to another, by forcing comparisons, and straining the faculties of mental association to an excess, is not the intelligence best broken to its most supple play? This is felt by all; and from the end of the sixteenth to the middle of the seventeenth century, affectation in Europe becomes an epidemic, of which "metaphysical" poetry is only a particular aspect. The intellectual forces of the mind are beginning to realise their latent power, and spend themselves thus in the deft brilliant handling of images; the drill in mental refinement, necessary for the moral analyses to which the century of classicism is about to devote itself, is inseparable from the exercise of the imagination, with which it still remains entangled. And the pleasure which comes to the mind from these sleights renders it insensible to the protests of judgment and cooler reason.

A passage in the verses penned by Dryden at the age of eighteen to mourn the death of the young Lord Hastings, his schoolfellow, is very often quoted, and deservedly.[1] About 1650 the uncertainty in matters of taste is still such, that there is nothing exceptional in prettinesses of this kind. Dryden here imitates Cowley, whose daring intellectual fantasies were just the lure that a young imagination can hardly resist. During the thirty years that intervene between this first effort in verse and the great satires, English poetry will rid itself of almost all this exuberance. The action of the French model, at once purer in form and more moderate in tone, will have a large share in this change, but no less efficient will be the inner progress in Dryden's own artistic perception.

And this progress is very soon noticeable. The stanzas written in memory of Cromwell have an oratorical swing, a vigour, a note of sincerity, which it would be unjust to question; in the person of the Protector, it is the greatness of England that is venerated by Dryden, and whose fatal eclipse he here mourns; he will always be a very ardent patriot; at the same time the errors in taste, and a somewhat laboured awkwardness, still show the apprentice at work. *Astræa Redux* has a greater sureness of touch, more solidity, an animated flow that is skilfully sustained, but again the poem has many inequalities. *Annus Mirabilis,* despite its faults, is the strongest work of Dryden in his first manner of writing, and here he reveals himself the undoubted master of the new poetry.

Certainly preciosity, the "metaphysical" devices, as it will be said[2] of the school to which classicism is about to put an end, are not absent from this work. A succession of episodes and brilliant passages, the poem can scarcely be said to have any real unity. It falls very low at times. But the inspiration which sustains these three hundred four-line stanzas has an undeniable vigour. While the imagination of the poet too often goes wrong, it shows at other times a striking power of evocation; and despite the somewhat short movement of the measure, the whole of this diversified narration is enlivened by a touch of historical and even epic emotion. The choice of the images is now suggested by old-time authors, whom Dryden imitates or adapts in his capacity of a faithful humanist; now, and usually with greater felicity, by personal and direct vision; as, for example, the comparison of the hare and the hound worn out by their running (stanzas 131–2), which has an appealing force, and a tone of raciness.

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[1] Hastings died of an eruptive malady. "Each little pimple," the poet tells us, "had a tear in it, To wail the fault its rising did commit."

[2] Dryden himself in 1693 invented this epithet, and applied it to Donne; Pope and especially Johnson set it in vogue.

The picture of the fleet and of the sea battles is lively and picturesque, but the reader feels in it the presence of a certain improvisation, and a lack of experience; that of the city where the noisy crowd is swarming in the glare of the conflagration, is worthy of its great theme. The final perspective of London rising again from its ashes has a fine amplitude of vision; and the style, by an instinctive harmony which reveals the born writer, supports these intense passages with accents of solemn full dignity.

Dryden has brought the English classical line to its perfection, and supplied Pope with his instrument. But his tastes as a metrist are not confined to the absolutely regular cadence of the couplet. No doubt, *Astræa Redux,* and most of the short early poems, are written in this measure; here Dryden shows himself to be the worthy heir of Waller and Denham; despite some hesitation still, and a few serious errors, this form of verse has already the firm strength of an implement for poetic argumentation, the use of which reinforces one through the other the regular sureness of the measure and the balanced lucidity of the thought. This weapon for irony and controversy will be again employed by Dryden in his great satires and didactic works. But he has a sense of other melodies, and freer; his ear, during these years of apprenticeship, seems to be haunted by the purely lyrical rhythm of the quatrain with alternate rhyming lines. *Annus Mirabilis,* and the stanzas to the memory of Cromwell, are written in this measure, of which d'Avenant after Davies had given the example in *Gondibert.* Although it is not, perhaps, suited to the demands of a long poem, it serves the elegiac intentions of the writer with much felicity in particular passages. All that there remains of the romanticist in the early Dryden, and the broad affinities of his nature with the wealth of rhythmic evocation, are thus displayed. The close of his career will see a return to the same instincts.

4. **The Lyricism of the Years of Maturity.**—This does not mean to say that the phase of Dryden's career when he concentrates on drama stifles this vein of spontaneous lyricism, in which his temperament is still linked up with that of the preceding age. Here and there in his plays are scattered short songs, light and, at times, inspired stanzas, which then have the soaring happiness, and a touch of the charming youthfulness of the Cavalier poets.

The satires and didactic poems, from 1681 to 1687, display a complete mastery of versification, a quality that is more easily felt than defined. Technical analysis can hardly, by itself, reveal the secret. The structure of Dryden's couplet, if compared with that of Pope's, undoubtedly has certain particular features to offer: the greater part still conceded to flexibility, a margin of variation in the rhythmical design; a few incomplete lines, ending at the hemistich, some alexandrines, the persistence of the triplet or series of three lines with a single rhyme, which metrists will readily condemn, but which with its effect of a lengthened utterance, or of a parenthesis and provisional conclusion, is often a happy asset; and lastly the remarkable freedom of the pauses, which closely fit the movement of the thought. But it is in this movement itself that one must look for the deep source of that full and vigorous vitality that is the animating force in the poetry of Dryden. Created in one and the same act, the measure and the idea are equally forceful, compact, easy, striking, because the mind of the poet possesses itself freely, and moves with facility among brilliant vivid ideas, and because the form comes as the natural dress with which these are spontaneously invested.

Dryden's satires belong to a group of works, from which it would be as well not to separate them (see Chapter iii). His didactic poems rank among the most successful examples of a thankless kind; the vigour of his genius, the gift which he possessed to a supreme degree of reasoning and arguing in verse, and his religious zeal, newly awakened to a more intense life, raise the debate above the arid plain in which controversy most willingly lingers. *Religio*

Laici owes to the concentrated force of virile reflection a singular, grave and noble beauty, animated at moments by a philosophic ardour, while a restrained imagination adds to the whole the subdued glow of a lyricism that is purely moral. More ample and more explicit, the ingenious symbolism of *The Hind and the Panther* is not free from reproach; the main theme—that of all fables—the merging of the animal world in that of man, is carried at times to that paradoxical degree where the ideas can no longer be kept from clashing with the images. Rather loose in its texture, the poem is not free from prolixity. But while Dryden takes sides, and cannot remain impartial, he spares the dignity of Anglicanism, which he had just before upheld, and makes a sincere effort to be fair. The clearness of the thought, the direct energy of the expression, the smooth movement, the robust quality of the maxims coined by the poet in his effortless manner, the rhythm, regular but not monotonous; graceful or pleasing episodes, a fresh and, as it were, powerfully naïve sincerity, a nervous and subtle argumentative skill, which the poetic cadence sustains and does not appear in any way to hamper, all make of this unequal work one of the eminent expressions of Dryden's genius.

The odes and lyrical poems of the last fifteen years (1685 to 1700) form a last outstanding group. Here we have true inspiration struggling to express itself, with an attention to style that is often too minute and artificial. The Pindaric model, as interpreted by Cowley, supplied the English poets with a pattern at once solemn and somewhat arbitrary, and which tempted the pens of all but a few writers of the time. *Threnodia Augustalis,* to the memory of King Charles II., and *Britannia Rediviva,* composed on the occasion of the birth of the future Pretender, the son of James II., are official exercises of the Poet Laureate; there is, however, in the first piece, written not without vigour, in very ample stanzas, and in lines of extremely unequal length, a general impression of order and proportion that is pleasing enough; the orchestration has movement, and the harmony swells or fades with brilliant virtuosity. More spontaneous of note, the famous *Alexander's Feast* is a still somewhat too clever masterpiece in imitative harmony; the flexibility, the variety, the wealth of rhythmic resources, and of the suggestive or descriptive methods employed, show the incomparable gifts of Dryden as a versifier. The *Ode for Saint Cecilia's Day* (1687), composed in all the heat of his recent conversion to Roman Catholicism, is purer in form, and of a more communicative musical beauty and sweetness. But it is perhaps in a piece of a more personal character, the *Ode to the Memory of Mrs. Anne Killigrew,* that Dryden strikes his most touching chords; no one can read without wonder the beginning and the close of this poem, which are full of an ardour and a grandeur of lyric vision, in which we feel the breath of modern romanticism, while they recall the mystic exaltation of the sacred poets of the seventeenth century.

The moving appeal of this ode; the attractive note of more than one effusion, be it of a gay nature, such as we find in the *Epistle to My Kinsman, John Dryden,* or full of a virile sadness, as in the verses to the memory of Oldham the satirist; the noble dignity with which the aged Dryden hails the rising glory of Congreve, or, dealing with the charges of Collier against a corrupt stage, strikes a balance between their exaggeration and their justice, without forgetting his own faults—all go to show us a poet whose inspiration is largely human, and who is very far removed, here again, from the impersonal objectivity towards which classicism was to tend in its theoretical purity. Lastly, it is worthy of note that in several passages of these later compositions there are lines written in "triple" measure (anapæstic, etc.), as if the free instinct of the metrist in Dryden was yielding to the spell of a cadence at that time out of favour, but one that is so restful to the ear, after the iambic rhythm and the short hammering of the couplet.

5. The Literary Theory of Dryden.—Just as Dryden is the master, so is he a theorist of the new poetry. A clear thinker, he has pondered the rules of his art; he has sought them in the works of the ancients, in those of the French, in nature as interpreted by his own temperament; his various essays, prefaces, epistles, prologues, and epilogues, inaugurate in England modern literary criticism, and propound, not without certain strong personal touches, the doctrine of classicism then in its opening stage.

The style of these treatises marks a date in the development of English prose, and on this account they should be compared with the other texts where this progress is most apparent.[1] Several among them—the most important perhaps—deal with dramatic art or satire, and they will be studied elsewhere under these headings. But when we collect the scattered remarks of Dryden on the rules of the craft of writing, we obtain an outline of general poetics; and the traces of his cult of the ancients are to be found everywhere in his work.

A word should be said here with regard to his translations in verse. They are plentiful, and show with what ease Dryden could handle the instrument he had forged. That of Juvenal is not entirely his own effort; that of the Iliad is only begun—Fate reserved the task of translating Homer to Pope; those of Persius, Ovid and Vergil are a monument of the poet's skill and flexible talent. His Æneid is unequal; temperamentally Dryden is more inclined to be energetic and passionate than gentle and suave; he keys up the story so as to bring out sheer pathos, the dramatic element, and the narrative interest; he accentuates and strains the discretion of Vergilian effects. His version of the Georgics is, in a way, more solid and regular; the sober dignity of the subject is better understood and respected. The nervous and full conciseness of the expression lends to the whole a very pleasurable quality; and while the translation has the freedom, the very relative accuracy, which were satisfactory to the taste of the time, it transposes the rural poem into a tone that is not in absolute dissonance with the original. At the worst, one notices as in the Bucolics a rusticity that is more marked and somewhat coarser, and a more familiar realism, than is discoverable in the lines of Vergil.

Dryden was in truth a humanist at heart. His opinions on the Latin satirists reveal a penetrating finesse. But when he comes to speak of the writers of his own country, his judgments evince the same insight. He has a natural sanity of taste, a sound and straightforward perception of the deeper character of men; and from the very first one feels that if his measure of æsthetic values is most often exact, it arises from the fact that it is guided by an intuitive grasp of the psychological and moral realities which are at the base of every work. Prepared thus for broad and direct criticism, Dryden strengthened this gift by providing himself with the extensive, but in no wise systematic, culture of a scholar; he never acquired erudition.

Despite their deficiencies and their weak points, his treatises supply the first model of the kind in England. Their doctrine is that of the French classicists, but inflected in a modern and national sense. The influence of French critics, such as Le Bossu, Rapin, and later Boileau, is less paramount on Dryden than on some of his contemporaries; he does not become, like Rymer, the passive adept of the "rules." To Corneille he shows deep respect; but the technique of his own plays evolves from submission to independence. The imitation of nature and truth, the model of which was supplied by the ancients, and which any novice can learn in their school; the identification of literary pleasure with the satisfaction of rational demands (*A Defence of an Essay of Dramatic Poesy*), such is the gospel of Dryden. It is also that of European classicism. It offers, however, an original feature, in that it insists readily on the shades of difference which time brings to the fundamental persistence of nature, and on the right of the newcomers to be the best judges, and the best painters, of the truth of their own century. The Elizabethans themselves, says the *Essay of Dramatic Poesy,* may have exhausted one kind of perfection; they have left us another. In the quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns, though Dryden does not side with the innovators, he cannot be said, on the other hand, to agree with the exclusive patrons of tradition. He is not afraid of saying that Chaucer is greater than Ovid. Full of the doctrine of the ancients, he bends it to a free and fruitful adaptation; and his creative instinct outruns and explains away the last scruples of the thinker.

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[1] See below, chap. v. sect. 5.

Such is indeed the character of his maxims on the art of playwriting, which we find scattered here and there, which are somewhat wavering in their doctrine, but whose unity resides in a very definite central line of evolution; and of his ideas on the precise problems of poetry. About rhyme, which he strongly defends, and then gives over for the theatre; about the various rhythms, language, and the unities, which he has interpreted in a broad sense, Dryden has spoken as one for whom the destiny of English literature lies in finding, through the same paths as French classicism, a golden age which the genius of the Elizabethans, despite its marvellous intuitions, did but approach; but in whose opinion the example of these old masters is both salutary and indispensable, because they have written and thought according to the profound instincts of their race. Such verses as those in which Dryden extols, against the "regular and thin" perfection of French art, against the characteristics of the French language "weakened by over-refinement," the vigour of the English "more capable of virile thought" (*Epistle to Motteux*), show to what extent the consciousness of national originality reaches deep and is irreducible in the mind of Dryden. Briefly, his doctrine, while it is rationalistic, is also realistic; accepting the fact of the individuality of a people and of its genius, it limits thereby the dangerous authority of pure reason.

6. Lyric Poets of the Restoration.—Among the contemporaries of Dryden, with writers whose personalities are less robust, the characteristics of the new age are more rigorously in evidence. The Restoration poets, on the average, are less complex by nature, and are less deeply linked up with a national tradition. They are dominated by the influences of their day: that of an age of dryness, when the natural outpouring of a singing soul tends to become a paradoxical exception; and that of an aristocratic and artificial society, in which only such themes are favoured as harmonise with the fashionable scepticism of a life of pleasure.

Almost all of noble birth, the rhymers of madrigals, treatises in verse and odes, who have written in the dazzling and frivolous splendour of Charles the Second's Court, or in the waning colder glow that lit up that of James, were for long considered as true poets. Established with the triumph of classicism, and in conformity with it, the official measure of literary values was registered during the eighteenth century in those voluminous anthologies which, neglecting a "barbarous" past, have transmitted to posterity the least poetical efforts of an age of culture. Johnson's *Lives of the Poets,* accepting this traditional cult with undisguised reluctance, make it already feel in the heyday of its power the edge of a clear good sense and of a sound frank judgment. Since then, the perspectives of English poetry have undergone a thorough change; and the courtier rhymers of the years of the last Stuarts have fallen to the rank of mere curiosities for the scholar.

This condemnation, a little summary, must in its turn be revised. Over the secondary poets of the Restoration, singularly shifting lights, no doubt, have been brought to play; under the changeful ray, many figures that formerly attracted notice have vanished into darkness; while others, whose features have been lighted up by a more generous curiosity or a more active sympathy, have assumed a more marked and new relief. On the whole, a better advised criticism nowadays tends to tone down such exaggerated discredit by many exceptions.

The dead parts of this literature are traceable chiefly to impulses that are wholly intellectual. Three main themes are dominant: gallantry; the sustained dignity of an abstract argumentation; the vehemence of a philosophic ardour. Love poems, didactic poems, "pindaric" poems, whether they seek animation and wit, reasonable cogency, or the sublime, are all chilled by the same cold atmosphere. Passion is scarce in them, and feeling exceptional; scarce also is the heat of a strong imagination, that can grasp the realities of the soul or of the world, and communicate their moving appeal.

With those who were chiefly attracted by the prestige of the ode, hardly a spark now testifies to the extinguished fire. The learned compositions of Cowley's imitators make up one of the most unprofitable chapters in the history of incipient classicism. A Sprat,[1] a Montague, Earl of Halifax,[2] for long made a figure through their ambitious efforts; but they are now unreadable.

Not less disappointing is the vein of the authors of treatises in verse. But these do not aim at any laboured and merely verbal sublimity; they are only plagued with dryness; their calm inspiration leaves room for the successful care of form. Since translating the ancients is in fashion, the Earl of Roscommon[3] composes a rhymed essay on the art of translation in verse, and himself renders in blank verse the *Ars Poetica* of Horace. The Duke of Buckinghamshire[4] writes an *Essay on Poetry,* that finds great favour among his contemporaries; and not without reason, because it represents in fact a very creditable grouping together of average qualities, while providing a clear and pleasant exposition of sensible ideas with a limited scope. There is no work that better reveals the implicit postulates, the deep-ingrained prejudices of this generation; the pursuit and the realisation of beauty are wholly governed by rules of wisdom, prudence and judgment. Imagination, the creative energy of the writer, do not seem to be taken into account.

The love theme, and its usual vehicle, the madrigal, are everywhere in evidence. Here the needs of the heart are paid but slight attention, and delicacy is too often put to shame; for the superficial lightness of the emotion only serves to cover a rather heavy sensuality. On the other hand, these mediocre strains have at times a pleasing turn. There is still a certain aristocratic quality about this literature of gallantry, so inferior to that of the preceding age, but in which a gift for language still persists. A will to refinement, and the influence of recent English or French models, are added to a natural distinction, and gloss over the poor quality of the matter. All the talents that court life demands—wit, the ready and correct reply, the care of expression, clearness of thought, regularity in the metrical arrangement of the line—give to these exercises in verse a polish that bespeaks elegance and good taste.

But only a polish . . . Just as the wit is at times forced, so the politeness is often only a mere outward show. In comparison with the light verse of the seventeenth or eighteenth century in France, that of the Earl of Dorset,[5] for example, betrays an intimate difference in quality. It is not entirely of its own choice that it is amiable and well-bred. Its amenities are strangely contradicted by flashes of violent realism. And truly one is at a loss to know whether in all these aristocratic displays of gallantry, the momentary outbreaks of brutality are more annoying by reason of the discordant note they strike, or relieve us more through their very candour.

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[1] Thomas Sprat (1635–1713), Bishop of Rochester and historian of the Royal Society: *Poems,* Chalmers and Johnson's *English Poets,* vol. ix.

[2] Charles Montague, Earl of Halifax (1661–1715): *Poems,* Chalmers, vol. ix.

[3] Wentworth Dillon, Earl of Roscommon (1633–85): *Poems,* Chalmers, vol. viii.

[4] John Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire (1648–1721): *Essay on Poetry,* 1682; second ed., 1691.

[5] Charles Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, Earl of Dorset (1638–1706): author of light poetry and satires: *Poems,* Chalmers, vol. viii.

But there is no gulf separating the Restoration from the great lyrical century of the English Renaissance. The one is the continuation of the other, and prolongs its decline. Now that these old collections of the Courtier poets have been better examined, they have yielded more than one gem, and indeed enough to key up the very tonality of the period, and to give it a richer colouring. The psychological temperament of another age, a fund of impulse as well as of instinct, which may appear to have been effaced or concealed, but which nevertheless secretly subsists, suddenly reappears. In the pages of these worldly rhymers, there are moments, touches of poetry and of true feeling; and among them are not a few who by nature have the gift of song, and whose sentiment, even in its light-heartedness, rises of itself into melody.

That rake Rochester[1] has his hours of tender effusion, and has written some charming little poems. Roscommon imitates La Fontaine in an *Ode on Solitude,* where he touches some deeper chords of feeling. From the pen of Mrs. Behn[2] we have examples of a pretty lyricism. But the most happily gifted temperament of this group is that of Sir Charles Sedley.[3] His is a striking felicity of easy images, of flowing graceful expression; he has an "inevitable" neatness of phrasing, lively, running rhythms, which ironical or artfully sensual inspiration seems to have created on the spur of the moment. He dashes off many a little masterpiece, of a kind in which perfection is delightful, but indispensable. The truth of that inner attitude, which had given a genuine ring to the saucy or libertine elegies of the Cavalier poets, is here perpetuated in this man of pleasure, who, losing all illusions, has kept an exceptional talent; and the spirit of a more conscious classicism gives a more finished turn to his creations, without depriving them of their freshness.

On the other hand, a literature of witty cynicism or frigid gallantry can have a poetry proper to itself; and this resides in the lucid and somewhat dry, but sincere intensity of a bitter, disillusioned outlook on life. The pessimism of intelligence wells out in the midst of all this feast of the senses, and there are notes which arrest us by the force of their truth. What Rochester has written is never indifferent; because he has amongst them all a manner that is at once the most French, the most elegant, and the most skilful; and because in his work there crops up a fund of clear-sighted observation, a scepticism with regard to the ambitious hopes of reason, a something that recalls Butler[4] and at the same time announces Swift. His *Satire against Mankind,* a free and original imitation of Boileau, is a piece of *bravura* in which we detect a serious intent. The ease of his argumentation, the neatness of his epigrams, realise at times the ideal itself of classical poetry: the incisive, cadenced expression of a perfectly clear idea. He stands out from among all the poetasters and fast livers of his class through the acrid distinction of a mind which intense and free experience precociously destroyed, but not without refining and sharpening it.

No epoch can be said to be morally simple and one. Just as this generation has its echoes of the Renaissance, its reminiscences of a lyric past both ardent and youthful, it shows as well some premonitions of the future. Nahum

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[1] John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester (1647–80): *Poems,* Chalmers, vol. viii. See Forgues, *Revue des Deux Mondes,* August–September 1857.

[2] Mrs. Aphra Behn (1640–89): her best poems figure as interludes in her plays. See below, chap. iv. sect. 4.

[3] Sir Charles Sedley (1639–1701): *Poetical Works,* 1707. See the study by Lissner, 1905 (*Anglia,* vol. 28).

[4] See further, chap. iii. sect. 2.

Tate,[1] a "bourgeois" poet, conscientious and mediocre, who had the honour of collaborating with Dryden in the second part of *Absalom*, reveals to us, before 1688, the temper in which the moralising literature of the next age was shaping itself. His pointless verse owes its interest to this documentary quality. There is a touch of sentimentalism in his lines, a virtuous indignation, a hint of the facile pathos in which the eighteenth century will delight. Certain poems, as, for example, his *Melancholy* or *The Midnight Thought*, anticipate Young. His psalms in verse enjoyed a long popularity. And those elements that will go to nourish the first silent preparation of romanticism are here perceptible. . . . .

Flatman[2] is more convincing, because he has more talent. With him, the strong and serious inspiration, the grave thoughts of a mind meditating upon death, heighten the prosaic tone of the language, and create a lyricism of striking truth. The sincerity of sentiment is even capable of animating the pindaric style, lending it a nobleness that it had so often sought in vain. With the great elaborate poems of Dryden, and some few pieces—as Sedley's *Ode Written in a Garden*—it is Flatman, in the best passages of *Retirement* or of his funeral dirges, who best justifies the existence of this bastard kind. And with that he possesses a faculty of effusion, natural enough to succeed occasionally in turning out madrigals, of a haughty and severe style that recalls the school of Malherbe. A poet, when talent prompts him, he often falls below himself; for the quality of his verve is very unequal, and reflects the essential instability of successful lyricism in an age of prose.

And yet, a literary age is an abstraction. Upon a complex and changing woof, in which the threads of the past interweave themselves with those of the future, each period, as it were, stands out in a dominant and simple tone. This unity is not an illusion; but it exists above all for the mind that seeks to simplify everything, and resolves itself upon more careful examination into innumerable shades. Such is, particularly, the case of the "classical" ages in English literature. The psychological elements of a subconscious romanticism are everywhere present, without discontinuity, at the very heart of the spirit of this time, linking up the past with the future; each probing and testing makes them reappear; and above all in this social reality, the meditative religious temperament of a middle class, that has remained in great part immune from the corrupting influences of the aristocracy.

To be consulted: *Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. viii. chaps. i. viii. ix.; Johnson, *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets*, 1781; Garnett, *The Age of Dryden*, 1895; Courthope, *History of English Poetry*, vol. iii., 1903; Gosse, *History of Eighteenth-Century Literature*, 1889; Saintsbury, *Minor Poets of the Caroline Period*, 3 vols., 1905–21; idem, *History of English Prosody*, vol. ii., 1908.

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[1] Nahum Tate (1652–1715): *Poems on Several Occasions*, 1677; *Psalms in Metre* (by Tate and Brady), 1696.

[2] Thomas Flatman (1637–88): *Poems and Songs*, 1674. See Saintsbury, *Minor Poets, etc.*, vol iii., 1921; F. A. Child, *Life and Uncollected Poems of Thomas Flatman*, 1922.

CHAPTER III

SATIRE AND THE SATIRICAL SPIRIT

1. The Restoration and the Satirical Spirit.—The great influences of the time unite to make the Restoration an age of satire. A society where the various forms of worldly life are in the ascendant raises to its highest point the respect of conventional values; and while orthodox morality suffers an eclipse, fashion and genteel taste in return hold undivided sway. The rational tone of thought helps to disentangle and formulate all rules; and the clearness of the principles renders their application more easy. Judging and condemning, as a result, grow more simple and more facile operations. In the exclusive circle of the cultured, the art of expressing one's judgment in literary terms becomes a highly natural exercise of the critical faculty; and the appeal to enlightened opinion is an unfailing means to acquire prestige and success.

On the other hand, with the re-establishment of the monarchy there breaks out an insurrection of instincts that have long been held in check; the revolt against austerity is accompanied by a reaction against hypocrisy; and the spirit of mockery or of satire brings with it to those consciences that are becoming liberated the feeling of sincerity, as well as that of independence. The open denunciation of false spiritual authorities becomes not only a duty, but a pleasure; and if with the desire for sanity there mingles the relish for licentiousness, if the audacity of thought, and the frankness of utterance, deviate into cynicism, this is only a reaction so natural that no one is tempted to wonder at it. The Restoration satirists are most often realistic and crude, just as they are biting to a degree; for, generally speaking, they are not very sure whether they are writing in the name of morality and in its defence, or against it, against the notion that others have formed of it. . . .

Political strife also accounts for the violence of tone. The Civil War, and the Protectorate, had known the most violent polemics; Milton had fought as desperately as any other. But in the controversies of the various sects, the vehemence sprang from the earnestness of the passion and the idea. The Restoration materialises and lowers even these conflicts. When political opposition is again stirred up, and the skirmishing of pamphlets flames up anew, party spirit replaces religious zeal. The battle is here transferred to another plane; and the ardour which formerly spent itself in fulminating and learned treatises, now pours itself forth in lampoons and satires. Henceforth, Whigs and Tories will engage in a pen war for the benefit of public opinion.

But there is something else at work in the literary atmosphere of the time. Classical influences favour a mode of expression which the tradition of the ages has consecrated. In ancient days the satirist was honoured; the study of the classics is now promoting familiarity with the works of Persius, Horace and Juvenal; these old masters are translated and imitated; did they not aim their shafts at the eternal enemies of wisdom, and was the man of those days in any way different from that of to-day? Before long, the contemporary mind awakes to the piquancy of anachronism, and of a suggestively bold application, or of an adaptation that lends a happily modern note to the things of the past. Besides, satire is in fashion with the French, and Boileau is its brilliant exponent. Thus is revived a scholarly and somewhat artificial style of writing, that in England could claim the precedents of Hall and Donne.

Whether sustained by a popular inspiration, and springing from the conflicts of social life, or the outcome of a reflective impulse, satire in England will enjoy until the close of the classical era a long and full life, rich in spontaneous fruits, and also in rather artificial products, according as the dominant influence is political hatred and aggrieved sentiment, or motives of abstract morality. Full of rank force and acidity under the Restoration, it will often disclaim any personal intent, but will almost always deal in personalities; and the relative sincerity of the satirical impulse will create new forms for itself, while infusing new life into the traditional forms.

2. Samuel Butler: "Hudibras."—We know little about the life of the author of *Hudibras;* still less about the man in Butler, with the result that one of the most interesting figures of this age remains in many respects an enigma.[1]

The first and very great success of his work is closely bound up with the Restoration itself, and points to an immediate harmony with the tastes of the cultivated public, the greater part of which by far was hostile to the memory of a defeated Puritanism. The long interval which elapses after the second part, the indifference which greets the third, the silence and neglect into which Butler seems to have fallen, betray both the uncertainties of a poem which, proceeding with no definite plan in view, remains an unfinished work; and the new preoccupations that are absorbing the minds of the time, after all the mockery and cynicism of a dawn which had seemed to herald a golden age.

In the days of the Civil Wars, when people were massacring each other "without knowing why," we see Sir Hudibras, the grotesque and corpulent knight of a hot-headed, quarrelsome cause, sallying out in company with his squire Ralph, who rides at his side. The first is a Presbyterian, the second an Independent; and their continual arguing recalls to life again an epoch when sect opposed sect in endless strife. Sprinkling their mishaps with mutual sermons, the two compeers ride forth to court adventure; pursuing a showman with his bear, who stirs up all the Puritan ire of Hudibras, now victorious, now defeated, cudgelled, imprisoned, liberated, they pass from episode to episode, just as it pleases a story which the poet himself does not take seriously. Sir Hudibras falls in love with a widow, and after receiving learned advice from an astrologer, suddenly vanishes; and nothing remains of the forgotten plot, save the powerfully grotesque figures of the two heroes, those of some secondary characters, and the outpouring of a satirical and critical verve, which is the only source of unity in the poem.

A poor imitation of Cervantes, with certain traits taken from Rabelais and Scarron, borrowings in every direction, all collected together without any logical or artistic order; a mock-heroic parody of the enthusiasm and mad fervour of the Puritans, but drowned in a series of interminable discourses—such is the first impression one has of the structure of Butler's work. The poem as a whole can find no support even in the principal characters; very minutely depicted as to their outward appearance, they evince as well in the author a gift of psychology, or rather of penetrating analysis, unaccompanied, however, with the faculty of creating life. They neither attract our sympathy nor incur our hatred, for they have no human quality. Each feature of their moral being is an observation, a judgment, an irony, the scope of which extends far beyond the personage itself, and embraces a whole general background of history and society.

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[1] Samuel Butler, the son of a small landowner, was born in 1612 in Worcestershire, studied at Worcester Cathedral School, and did not enjoy, it would appear, the privilege of a university education, but acquired his very wide scholarship from his reading; occupied several subordinate posts as scribe or clerk in the employ of Elizabeth, Countess of Kent, and of Sir Samuel Luke, a Puritan squire in Bedfordshire. He was a student of law, and a keen observer of contemporary manners, which are put to ridicule in his poem. *Hudibras* appeared shortly after the Restoration (first part, 1663; second, 1664; third, 1678), and met with great success, although the author, lauded to the skies by the Court for a time, scarcely seems to have reaped any tangible reward. After an old age spent in retirement, and perhaps in poverty, Butler died an embittered man in 1680, leaving behind various works in prose and verse, which were published without any guarantee as to their authenticity in 1759 (*Genuine Remains, etc.*), and which present problems still unsolved. *Collected Works,* ed. by Waller, 2 vols., appeared in 1905–8; third vol., ed. by Lamar, in preparation. *Hudibras,* ed. by Grey, 1744; ed. by Johnson, 1893; ed. by Milnes, 1895. See Courthope, *History of English Poetry,* vol. iii., 1903; Garnett, *The Age of Dryden,* 1895; Lamar, *Revue Anglo-Américaine,* February 1924.

But this summary and loose plot, these composite portraits, are instinct with an extraordinary satirical force. Lucid, harsh, fully conscious of its powers and master of itself, it gathers itself up into strokes of incomparable concentration, even if their indefinitely repeated series produces in the long run a feeling of monotony and dispersion. The substance of the poem is composed of an uninterrupted series of epigrammatic sayings, as short as they are pointed, bitingly sarcastic, flung off as if from some rebounding spring. The line of four beats, with its sharp and powerful pulsation, is behind this total effect where the rhythm of the ideas is inseparable from that of the words; whilst the rhymes, stressed, sonorous, or feminine, exaggerated, ironical, macaronic even, embroider over this ground of compact regularity a pattern of luxuriant impertinence. The inventiveness of Butler in the province of rhythm, although restricted to a narrow field and to dry effects, yet without an equal in its own kind, has produced one of the definitive moulds of expression in literature. His couplets, his maxims which have the ring of proverbs, haunt our memory, lend themselves with special readiness to quotation; and the name of his hero has remained connected with a type of verse as of poetry.

The vein of comedy which he works up is considerably varied, and of a very mixed quality; the finest elements mingle in it with the coarsest; an erudition as huge as it is incongruous feeds it with the drollest allusions, while the author's keen moral observation enriches it with a profound sense of all the aspects of a soul's self-deceit. Never have the innermost recesses of subconscious egoism, or of that folly in human nature which is quite unaware of itself, been so cruelly explored and revealed. Presented in formulæ of a piquant compactness, this bitter experience is spontaneously amusing, and deftly plays with the wit that lies in words as with that which lies in ideas. But the restraint it constantly exercises over itself, its power of cold and apparently impassible expression, the delightful discrepancy that continually enhances the comic value of things, through their incongruous, indirect, and transposed presentment, lend to the whole poem an undeniably humorous character. A fertile inventor of puns, epigrams, and lashing mockery, an expert, like Rabelais, in the full-flavoured art of vocables, Butler is also one of the masters of humour.

That is to say, his work has in it a wealth of intention, a fund of thought, only revealed by way of an implicit suggestion, and which is not easy to thoroughly explore. The philosophy of *Hudibras* works itself out in several successive planes; and its contours are difficult to determine. The work is first of all, and undoubtedly, a scathing indictment against the Puritan régime, and against the moral temper upon which it had been raised. Sensual and cowardly, pedantic and covetous, Sir Hudibras has in him all the weaknesses of the flesh, whilst his vain pretension to the virtues of conscience is the most ludicrous hypocrisy. His grotesque pride as a magistrate is in keeping with the obstinacy of his squire, who is a mystic enthusiast; and the one like the other brings to the service of their sectarian zeal a cunning glibness of tongue and the arrogance of a demented arguing power. The hostile picture of a religious, political and social age is complete in these two types, and in their reciprocal reaction. But a kind of inner logic carries the satire much farther. As if he obeyed the need of unreserved self-expression, Butler develops to their utmost range the themes he has here set himself to treat; with the result that very soon it is no longer a question of one single epoch, or of one doctrine; the poem becomes a general criticism of society, of thought, and of man.

The links connecting up these digressions with the main subject are to be found in the central theme of insincerity, of Puritan affectation. This latter is disguised in a special pedanticism, a biblical jargon, as well as in a pretended austerity of manners. In the mind of Butler a fusion takes place between the pedantic lie of theological Puritanism, and all the vain pretensions of human science. The suggestions of certain literary models, the example of Rabelais, all the enthusiasm of modern rationalism, which for a century had been gradually growing stronger, and rising against the methods of intellectual authority, make of *Hudibras* a belated satire on Scholasticism. The hero is not only a man of corpulent size, but his head is puffed up with abstruse knowledge; he and Ralph bandy with each other all kinds of incongruous learning. But it is not only the effort to know, and the very exercise of thinking, that thus appear sullied by radical errors and vanities; the false glamour of knowledge is paralleled everywhere by false values; churches, spiritual authorities, governments, social forms, institutions, rules of life, nothing can withstand the merciless inroads of the most corrosive intellectual sourness.

Where does Butler lead us? How far does the sly vigour of his destructive jeering want to go? To absolute scepticism, or to a prudent and moderate good sense? To unrelieved pessimism, or to a disillusioned wisdom? It is doubtful whether he himself has a very clear conception of the limits of his denials, and of the positive affirmations at which his thought may still snatch. Among the diverse works attributed to his pen, those whose authenticity is beyond all doubt throw some light upon this problem, but not enough to dissipate all darkness. In his short poems, several of which are satires, and in his *Characters* the personality revealed is indeed that of the author of *Hudibras*, but perhaps more supple, less uniformly strung up to wreak a will of irony and scorn. It seems as if the rage and intoxication of seeing through all things had not withered away all his convictions; nor does he appear to have experienced like Swift, whom he seems to announce in so many respects, the maddening sense of solitude in a barren moral world. If he has upbraided all religious denominations, he seems to imply, and indeed he sometimes says, that Anglicanism is the least unreasonable of beliefs; if he saps all the conventions upon which the monarchy rests, he has nevertheless written and lived as a partisan of the restored Stuarts. And while the Royal Society itself does not escape his mockery, he has spoken of reason with all the respect of a man to whom the hatred of false science is but the manifestation of his love for the true.

Are these solutions final, or only temporary? Is his thought pledged to them, or are they but the calculated decisions of his sense of utility? One has the impression that, all things considered, Butler maintains an attitude in which is visible that English fund of practical empiricism, of which "pragmatism" is but the present form; that he accepts as lesser evils the intellectual or social necessities of life, and submits, in a certain measure, his uncompromising need of truth to their discipline. But this is a joyless resignation; and although one must not be led to see a Romanticist in Butler, one's ear catches in his work an accent that is unmistakable. Emerging in his mature years into an atmosphere of rationality, but obsessed by the recent experience of a vast collective fit of unreason, he exhausted himself in denouncing a past even then abolished. He repeatedly struck at dead enemies, Puritanism and Scholasticism, without being able to turn towards a future which his intellectual temperament was especially suited to understand. To this bent of his thought he owes the violent character of his satirical genius, the main feature of which is an ironical sneer at everything; and it is in this light that one must view him, without stopping at the partial abdications to which his free critical sense, under pressure of vital exigencies, had to consent. He thus retains the character of an incomplete, but original and robust artist; of a thinker arid, but strong, and singularly modern.

3. Political Satire: Marvell, Oldham.—Under the Restoration the domain of political satire is vast and crowded; and only the scholar can explore all its corners. Great names, brilliant or powerful works stand out above a multitude of pamphlets and invectives, which in the most varied forms express one and the same fund of virulent enmity; where intense words fail to give any artistic relief to the monotony of these outpourings of hatred.

It is the art of the satirist which alone counts here. The contemporaries, struck by the wealth of this production, have gathered from it the collections entitled *Poems on Affairs of State,* in which satires are intermixed with pieces of different character, and of unequal interest. Among their very diverse themes, there are heard the outbursts of a vigorous impassioned inspiration: that of a seething anger against the absolutist and Catholic tendencies of the Stuarts. All the genius of a Dryden, thrown on the side of the monarchy, cannot prevent the confused instinct of an irritated people from voicing itself in even louder tones; and another writer—Andrew Marvell—from lending a poetical expression to this instinct.

Marvell belongs to the preceding age in English literature.[1] A belated survivor like Milton, he preserves in the midst of the children of Belial the forceful energy of a character that has been tempered by Puritanism. His satires, by virtue of the definite occasion which called them into existence, are part and parcel of the Restoration and must be connected with it.

This occasion brings together three poets of the transition in which the new literature develops from the old. Waller,[2] a Courtier poet at heart, had celebrated an English naval victory, and attributed its triumph to the reigning dynasty (*Instructions to a Painter,* 1665); Sir John Denham[3] had inveighed against this adulation in lines of greater manliness (*Directions to a Painter,* 1667); and Marvell, in more violent accents, aims at the same butt the harsh ironies of his indignant patriotism (*Instructions to a Painter,* 1667, '71, '74). Sparing at first the king's person—for he knows how to bend the stiffness of his principles, and is not above tactics of caution—then abandoning all reserve, he launches until his death (1678) a series of attacks against the foreign policy of the king, and the scandals of public life or of the Court. Unable to disclose his identity, he has to circulate these pamphlets anonymously, either in manuscript form or in loose sheets, and to hide his main purpose under the veil of allegories. But the personality of the author reveals itself in most cases, and the pulsating ardour of his feeling shines out through all disguises (*Britannia and Raleigh, Dialogue between Two Horses,* etc.). In a language of extraordinary raciness, and a popular tone, with a raw realistic touch, the rage and shame of an England that has been humiliated, enslaved, and contaminated by foreign vices and fashions, are here expressed. Such feelings were still exceptional, but their contagious influence was spreading obscurely. As if the new spirit in poetry supplied him with his instrument of expression, Marvell writes most often in heroic couplets; but his unpolished verse, capable of surprising vigour, has not the necessary suppleness or regularity, and rather reminds one at times of the simple ballad rhythms. The irresistible virtue of a lofty soul, of a heart embittered but obsessed by noble regrets and high thoughts, nevertheless imbues these strange poems with an energy of movement and phrase, with an eloquence, that make them one of the most eminent examples of English political satire.

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[1] Andrew Marvell (1621–78). See Part I. *Works,* ed. by Grosart, 1873; *Poems,* ed. by Aitken, 1898; *Works,* ed. by Margoliouth, in preparation. The authenticity of Marvell's satires is subject to much controversy and doubt.

[2] Edmund Waller (1606–87): *Poems,* ed. by Drury, 1893. See Part I.

[3] Sir John Denham (1615–69). *Poems,* Chalmers, vol. vii. See Part I.

John Oldham[1] is another strong and harsh talent; though with him one cannot but notice how the literary aim of the writer, and even his tricks of phrasing, intensify the spontaneous vivacity of his passion. His satirical temperament offered a natural affinity with that of Juvenal; a fact of which he was fully conscious, and which told upon his manner. His profession brought him into close touch with the Latin classics; he translated them (for example, the episode of Byblis, from the Ninth Book of the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid) and above all adapted them. Boileau had shown what profit the new literature could draw from voluntary anachronism as a means of art. Rochester, in a playful mood, had followed this example (*Allusion to the Tenth Satire of the First Book of Horace*, 1678); Oldham follows it more deliberately. His preface to the *Ars Poetica* of Horace, which he imitated in English (1681), is very explicit: after Ben Jonson and Roscommon, to again translate this poem might not have been excusable, had not an essential novelty been realised by putting Horace into a more modern dress—that is, by making him speak as if he were living and writing now. "I . . . resolved to alter the scene from Rome to London, and to make use of English names of men, places, and customs. . . ." Several satires of Horace and Juvenal are "imitated" in this manner, and the method is even applied to Boileau (*Eighth Satire, A Satire Touching Nobility*).

These efforts, though ingenious and interesting, are valuable less on their own account than for the way they opened, and in which Pope was to go farther. But it is by his four *Satires on the Jesuits* that Oldham should be judged; they form his most ambitious work, and the only one that is really substantial, for he died at the age of thirty, cutting short a career of promise. They present a compromise between the scholarly and the popular types, but nearer to the former. There is movement in them, a vigour of tone somewhat uncontrolled, a monotonous accumulation of effects that repeat but do not always reinforce one another; and, at the same time, a brilliance, a felicity in details, an energy of expression that can invent striking, unforgettable words; a rather heavy language, an often neglected verse. There is no humour to relieve the eloquence and irony of the execration; the shade of Loyola denounces the monstrous secrets of the Jesuits with a simplicity that is naïve to the extreme; however animated and coloured the pictures, they cannot lend any artistic value to invectives where the touch of Juvenal is everywhere apparent, and yet does not destroy the evident sincerity of the writer. A passionate nature, prone to brutality, with sensual impulses, a relish for honest purposes, a descriptive, concrete verve, Oldham attracts the reader and holds his interest more by virtue of the virile character of his personality, than by the actual merit of his poems.

If in these pieces, and in the rest of his satirical work, Oldham appeared original in the eyes of his contemporaries, it is because he aimed at general, impersonal criticisms, supported, it is true, by the crudest details, but bearing on the vices themselves, and sparing the individuals. Such qualities indeed infused satire with the real classical spirit, and raised it above the ordinary pamphlet and lampoon. Oldham has not been always faithful to this ideal, which others also preached, but which no one realised in his generation; yet he has always developed particular subjects into wider themes, which his slightly declamatory rhetoric knew very well how to use to advantage (*A Satyr addressed to a Friend, that is about to leave the University; A Satyr upon a Woman, etc.*)

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[1] John Oldham (1653–83), the son of a dissenting minister, was born in Gloucestershire and studied at Oxford; an usher, then teacher, in a school, he passed his short life in dependent positions. He wrote amorous verse, pindaric odes, translated or adapted Juvenal, Boileau, etc., composed satires (*A Satyr against Vertue; A Satyr upon a Woman, etc.;* four *Satyrs upon the Jesuits*, 1681; *A Satyr concerning Poetry; A Satyr addressed to a Friend that is about to leave the University, etc.*). *Poetical Works*, ed. by Bell, 1854. See Courthope, *History of English Poetry*, vol. iv., 1903.

4. **The Satires of Dryden.**—Dryden was over fifty when he wrote his great satires.[1] His genius now possessed all its vigour, and he was the master of perfect poetic expression; life, on the other hand, had matured his moral nature without embittering it; he had sufficient strength to dominate and govern his hatred. Besides, the motives which prompted these poems are not of one single kind. Personal conviction, no doubt, counts for much among them; the crisis of the Popish Plot had given a definite turn to opinions and classified men; Dryden, following his tastes and the deliberate tendencies of his temperament, sought the side of the monarchy, just as he was soon to embrace a dogmatic faith. Suspicious of Shaftesbury and of the principles with which the popular cause identified itself, he is led to denounce the most dangerous partisans of this cause, the middle-class Whigs of the Town (*The Medal*). Against his former friend, Shadwell (*MacFlecknoe*), he had many grievances: a now manifest divergence of political opinions, the antipathy of an artistic nature as against a vulgar temperament, the legitimate resentment following a personal attack (*The Medal of John Bayes,* 1682). But at the same time, he does not forget that he is supporting the cause of the king, and that he writes with the connivance of the Court. A poet laureate should show both skill and self-command if he is engaged in strife during his tenure of office.

This is the explanation of the superiority of art in Dryden's satires. At times the violence of his tone is equal to that of his contemporaries; he has praised Oldham, in some fine lines, for having known, like himself, how to hate strongly (*To the Memory of Mr. Oldham,* 1683). He even confesses that he could hardly trust the susceptibility of his own temperament (*Essay on Satire*). But his mastery of expression allowed him in any case a scrupulous attention to form; and the fire of his inspiration is tempered by the full and clear consciousness of the artist.

Must one add to these honourable reasons certain motives that are less noble? Is the very noticeable manner in which Dryden spares Shaftesbury, to be taken as a precaution on the part of the author, in view of a possible turn of fortune? The passage in which the magistrate, distinguished from the meddling politician, receives a tribute of praise, was introduced into the poem after the triumphant acquittal of one whom the Court sought to ruin. It is not impossible that Dryden should have been influenced by the trend of circumstances; his sincere esteem for certain traits in the accused could not be easily expressed when he himself was pursuing the latter's condemnation; a favourable verdict, contrary to the expectation of the Court, restored to the poet part of his independence. There is no necessity here to find Dryden guilty of baseness; but it must be recognised that he did not seek to rise above the part of political agent, which the royal favour called upon him to play.

The matter of Dryden's satirical work is not original. No theme was more generally familiar for the purposes of satire than the utilisation of biblical personages and scenes. In 1680, a hostile pamphleteer likened Monmouth to

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[1] *Absalom and Achitophel:* first part, 1681; the second part, 1682, is by Nahum Tate (see chap. ii. sect. 6; the portraits of Doeg and Og are by Dryden); *The Medal* and *MacFlecknoe,* 1682.

Absalom; in 1681, a satirist had dubbed Shaftesbury an Achitophel. In this ready-made frame, Dryden displays all the classical power of form. Aided by a clear and well-thought-out plan, his construction acquires an architectural quality, of which English literature, leaving Milton aside, had offered few examples since the instinctive creations of Shakespeare; though the intellectualised art of Dryden, to tell the truth, does not quite rediscover in its integrity the intuitive secret of the logic of life. Despite an inner order and true progression, the poem betrays some uncertainty, a development that is not balanced in every part. But the details are worked in by a touch that is broad and free, with a wonderful infallibility. A rich concrete verve plays with the trick of anachronism, and extracts from it all the relish of its effects; the irony of the satire, at times indulgent and fraught with good-naturedness, at others much more severe, controls the action, and groups the figures and their movements into one general irresistible suggestion. The innate goodness, the beneficent majesty of an indulgent king, radiate from the work, penetrating the reader and winning his sympathy; behind the attractive but misguided son, and bathed in a doubtful light of ridiculous or ominous hue, stand the crew of the fomenters of revolt, dominated by the equivocal, mobile countenance of the evil counsellor. This energy of persuasion is still enhanced by the argumentation of the story, and by the speeches, in which everything with admirable unity converges to the same end.

This art, of almost unexceptionable clearness, but robust and coloured, and by no means timid, but reaching sureness through vigour, is chiefly concentrated in the portraits with which the work abounds. In these we admire the very fine sense of delicate touch, the felicity of picturesque characterisation; above all, as Coleridge has said, the living truth of organic wholes, which, within a general outline once drawn, gather substance through the addition of connected and psychologically linked traits. Nowhere else do we find so free an example of Dryden's classicism, enriched and set off as it is by a romanticism of the imagination.

The style illustrates both. Here are all the qualities, for the most part negative, with which the progress in literature had identified itself for the last generation; a just accuracy, a guarded fitness; the fever of intellectual imagination is now appeased, and with it the "conceits" have disappeared. A kind of virile instinct guides the inventive genius of the writer, directing it towards alliances of words and ideas in which brilliancy and novelty harmonise with the demands of taste. But all the central warmth, all the imaginative ardour subsists; it acts as an animating force within the expression itself, imbuing it with energy, vividness and vitality. Condensed in brief evocations, in sober, striking images, the power of poetic suggestion is here to be found in its fullness, in no way impeded by the exercise of the writer's critical judgment. And one feels, in fact, that the mind of the poet does not act in a double capacity; that his critical faculty and his creative verve do not impair each other, because they cannot be distinguished one from the other. The style of Dryden, in his most decidedly classical pieces, is above all an inspired style; its purity and its firmness, just like its force and its lustre, are due to the unique felicity of a nature in which spontaneity had become synonymous with art.

It has been rightly said, also, that Dryden's satirical vein owes its outstanding quality to the fact that it represents—better and more profoundly than in the case of Oldham—a reconciliation between the scholarly ideal and popular inspiration. It remains popular because of its biblical setting, its imaginative theme, its direct allusions, and the portraits to which the reader could always attach a name. It is scholarly by virtue of its deportment, its relative moderation, the choice and the dignity of its expression, the generality of the thought, and that standard value, that impersonal significance, which Dryden has vested in the individual and at the same time representative figures of Zimri, Achitophel and Shimei.

Although a literary triumph, the poem had missed its immediate political end; it was hailed by a host of answers and parodies. The cause which it had served, however, carried the day a year later, and Shaftesbury had to seek refuge in Holland. Towards the end of 1682 there appeared a second part, published like the first anonymously, and in no way called for by the plan of the first. It is the work of a writer other than Dryden, but he had inserted therein two very fine passages, the portraits of Doeg and Og (Settle and Shadwell). Here the satire is no longer restrained by the desire for sober reserve which characterised the earlier poem, and a prodigious power of scornful realism gives itself vent.

In the interval were published *The Medal* and *MacFlecknoe*. The medal struck with the effigy of Shaftesbury after his acquittal becomes for Dryden the symbol of sedition. With an eloquence that now rings harsher and more direct, he denounces the hankering after republicanism which the bourgeoisie of the City still fostered, but would not admit; and this shapeless, many-membered body becomes a monster, a hydra of anarchy. Political reasoning now invests itself with the garb of impassioned imagination, and Dryden here shows the same genius for versified argumentation as in his religious poetry. Shadwell, the dramatist, and a Whig, is the hero of *MacFlecknoe*. The terrible fustigation to which he is subjected owes its origin to a disagreement in which there is an admixture of political motives, but of which the dominant reasons are of an individual order. Dryden therefore uses, and liberally, the right which he recognises in the satirist of attacking, not only the vice, but the vicious. This personal satire has all the characteristics of a comic, mock-heroic fantasy—the pompous crowning, by Flecknoe, a prince among poetasters, of an heir worthy of himself—which will supply Pope with more than one trait of his *Dunciad*. The blending, a special gift with Dryden, of a crushing force of mockery with the sovereign good-humour of a merry giant, strong enough to conquer without strain and bitterness, remains the particular feature of this poem.

In the copious outpouring of political satire at this moment in history, there is scarcely anything after Dryden that merits examination. In order to fully appreciate the unique value of his work, it is useful to compare it with one of the replies it elicited, for example, the *Absalom Senior, or Achitophel Transprosed*, of Elkanah Settle (1682). One sees here how much the conscientious use of biblical analogies was in the reach of mediocre writers, and in what painstaking heaviness their labour resulted. The poem displays some talent, and has forcible lines; but an unbearable sense of boredom emanates from this ponderous narrative, overloaded with names, encumbered by too many allusions, in which Dryden's ironical methods are turned against himself with a docile obstinacy worthy of better success.

It will suffice to enumerate here, and in passing, the various kinds of popular satire during the last twenty years of the seventeenth century, and to recall their close connection with the political incidents of the day, the most important of which is the revolution itself of 1688. These ephemeral writings, with few exceptions, bear the traces, either in the substance or in the form, derived for the most part from certain favourite themes, such as the apologue of the masters of this literary kind—Marvell, Oldham and Dryden. They are drawn from the Bible, the dialogue, the portrait or "character," and the apparition of a ghost. Thus, from literary forms polished by the talent of a Rochester (*The History of the Insipids*, 1676; *On the Young Statesmen*, 1680), or animated by the vigour of a Marvell, one descends in quick transition towards the "litanies" and "ballads" recited and sung at the street corners, and which owed their popularity to simple, taking measures, or to tunes that were in vogue. One of these refrains, "Lilliburlero," furnished almost the whole nation in 1688, when James II. fled, with one of those rallying signals that help public sentiment to crystallise, and thanks to which decidedly mediocre lines may be immortalised.

5. The Theory of Scholarly Satire: Influence of the Ancients.—The *Hudibras* of Butler is not a regular satire, but a mock-heroic poem, full of scornful irony. Marvell had paid scant attention to traditional forms, and had voluntarily brought his rough apologues within the range of the language and instincts of the people. Dryden, writing on behalf of the royal cause, or in order to avenge himself upon Shadwell, had allowed his verve to flow freely into the mould which the usual forms of contemporary imagination offered. Oldham, alone, in spite of his political intentions, had taken care to respect the classical models of satire. In his way he had re-established the tradition of Hall and Donne.

And yet, the models of antiquity had never enjoyed greater prestige, nor exercised more attraction. If their effective influence has not been more constant upon the masters of the style at this epoch, it is because political inspiration, intermingling irresistibly literature with life, was directing the writer towards free and new forms, more in keeping with public sentiment, which had to be solicited.

This does not mean to say that the forms of antiquity were less honoured. Dryden translated the Latin satirists. Heading a translation of Juvenal, in which he collaborated (1692), there is a long preface which plays the part, and has received the name, of an *Essay on Satire*. It centres round a comparison between Horace, Juvenal and Persius, the upshot of which is that Dryden, while feeling a greater esteem for the urbanity of Horace, and the helpfulness of his lessons, cannot but prefer Juvenal for the liveliness of his comic force and the vivacity of his style. However, in his *Absalom* he himself has rather preferred to follow the manner of Horace—as is shown in the character of Zimri. "How easy it is to call rogue and villain, and that wittily! But how hard to make a man appear a fool, a blockhead, or a knave, without using any of those opprobrious terms!" Led away by the logic of this preference, by the moralising dignity to which the seriousness of his subject usually raises the critic, and also, probably, by the Christian charity that had become very conscious within him, Dryden condemns the personal element in satire. Lampoons, such as are written so profusely, he says, are a dangerous weapon, and he himself of set purpose has disdained to reply when he was attacked. . . . Nevertheless, to retort remains a right, and in the public interest it is permitted "to make examples of vicious men." As for the rules of modern satire, they are simple: the subject should be one; the poet must put us on our guard against one single vice, must extol one single virtue; the tone shall be lively and pleasant, with due respect for good manners; the heroic line of ten syllables, a more ample measure, shall be preferred to the short verse of *Hudibras*. Finally, the perfect model of this art can be found in the *Lutrin* of Boileau.

This interesting essay, in which the temperament of Dryden is somewhat lost to view under a conventional dignity, lays down the laws of satire in its literary purity, such as the mind of a humanist was able to conceive it. Thus defined, satire comes dangerously near a sermon, and tends to become a purely artificial form. So strong is the authority of the classical ideal, derived from the Ancients, that Dryden does not dare to recognise and hail the very life of satirical inspiration where it is to be found: in the works of a Butler, a Marvell, or in his own writings. . . . He only places his *Absalom*, modestly, in the line of Varro. The artificial kind which he recommends will only be saved from mere imitation by the systematic use of anachronism, by frank and strictly modernised adaptations of ancient themes. This will be Pope's method, and already Rochester and Oldham have essayed it. But Dryden thinks that he ought to repress the guilty inclination which carries the modern reader towards parody; if in his Juvenal this "fault which is never committed without some pleasure," has not always been avoided, it is a licence wherein he excuses himself, and which he reproves in principle. . . . In fact, he does not take very great pains to avoid it.

His critical judgment, therefore, appears here to be somewhat timid; his creative instinct was not hampered by all these rules. These, meanwhile, were showing their sterility among his contemporaries. The "regular" satires of this age are far from equalling, either in number or in value, the free expressions of the satirical spirit; and almost all of them relieve their commonplaces with personal allusions. Oldham is the only notable exception. Another writer, if we believe Dryden, would have equalled or even surpassed the Ancients: Charles Sackville, Lord Buckhurst and Earl of Dorset,[1] to whom the translation of Juvenal is dedicated. But this is one of those extravagant statements to which even a Dryden was led by forced adulation. The *Epistle to Mr. Edward Howard* and the *Satire on a Lady of Ireland* are witty, biting poems, not free from harshness or indelicacy, quick in movement, pleasing in form, but devoid of any serious originality. Their scope, besides, is exclusively individual.

The *Essay on Satire* by John Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire,[2] unwittingly confirms the conclusions suggested by that of Dryden. He also, bowing to the authority of a moral propriety which classicism turned into a law, explains the high ideal of an impersonal satire, and interweaves with his reflections the most plainly wounding allusions to persons. . . .

Much rather than to Buckhurst, Dryden's praise might have been given to Rochester; a man to whom, it is true, he too justly could bear a grudge. In the *Satire against Mankind*,[3] in the *Allusion to the Tenth Satire of the First Book of Horace*, the criticism of moral or literary values is raised to a height of true impersonality by a writer of vigorous thought and penetrating judgment, without the least touch of abstract banality; and if the jeering of Rochester is elsewhere of the most galling harshness, it possesses a natural quality of form, an elegant distinction, that lend it a lasting artistic worth.[4]

6. The Diffusion of the Satirical Spirit.—In order to complete the study of the various expressions of the satirical spirit, the stage also would have to be taken into account. The Restoration theatre is, in a sense, and in its most brilliant aspects, one great satire; and it is not only comedy which supports this statement: Otway in the tragedy of *Venice Preserved* portrays Shaftesbury under the repelling and recognisable traits of Senator Antonio. Throughout the whole of this theatre, the prologues and epilogues are constantly made the occasion for allusions and mockery.

Thus quick with life and spreading everywhere, the spirit of satire will be bequeathed by the Restoration to the classical age.[5] It will be at the root of all the work of Pope and Swift; it will inspire the gentle efforts of the *Spectator* to correct the manners of the day. Even as it realises itself more fully, the literature of reason will more and more become a literature of criticism. In this way will actually be reached the true and loftiest aims of satire; but without the critical spirit, that subtle and all-pervading leaven, concentrating itself within the narrow bounds of any one kind. In vain will talented writers, such as Young, make supreme attempts to revive in England the general, reasoning, and solemn type of satire, the eloquent denunciation of vice, the persuasive exaltation of virtue, according to the recipes and formulæ of the theorists.

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[1] See above, chap. ii. sect. 6. [2] See idem. [3] See idem.

[4] The poem of Thomas Otway, *A Satire against Libels*, 1680, offers a curious example of the intellectual reprobation which the violent tone of the popular pamphlets aroused among the cultivated minds of the time.

[5] The intrepid nature of Restoration satire had found, at least in theory, a limit in the Licensing Act, by virtue of which the monarchy had wanted to suppress certain publications animated by a spirit of open hostility against the Crown or the persons in authority. The best known among the censors under Charles II., Roger L'Estrange (1616–1704), was himself a pamphleteer and took part in the quarrels of his time. The Licensing Act, suspended in 1679 and re-established in 1685, expired finally in 1695, without ever having constituted a very effective barrier against the freedom of the press.

To be consulted: *Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. vii., chap. vii.; vol. viii., chaps. ii. iii. viii.; Previté-Orton, *Political Satire in English Poetry*, 1910; see studies on Butler, Marvell, Dryden, Oldham, etc.

CHAPTER IV

THE THEATRE

1. Limits of the First Period.—The greatest literary activity during the Restoration is to be found in the sphere of the theatre, and the authors of comedy form, perhaps, the most brilliant group of writers in their epoch, and one which best illustrates its moral features. On the other hand, they outshine their immediate successors. Therefore histories of literature will take Restoration dramatists as a centre for the study of the English theatre at the end of the seventeenth and at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the classical age being, so to speak, in this domain, a weaker continuation of that which precedes it.

If one looks at the subject from the point of view of the evolution of kinds, there may be some advantage in not separating the successive phases of a movement which extends over some fifty years, and which, taken altogether, forms a natural whole. Comedy in particular—that of Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh and Farquhar—would appear to represent an unbroken series of connected works. But if the history of literature is brought into close contact with that of thought, and looked upon as an aspect of the total development of a society, this linked succession must be broken up, leaving room for a division that is more logical, and historically better founded. In reality, a generation separates Wycherley from Congreve.

The break, in the interval, is marked by the Revolution of 1688, with the moral changes which accompany it. In every respect English literature between 1688 and 1702 forms a period of transition; both in inspiration and in style, it then bears the stamp of a special character; and each literary kind reveals the influence of a spirit akin, no doubt, to that of the Restoration itself, but still different from it. In order to understand this period, it will be useful to view it as a whole.

The dates 1660 and 1688 therefore, for the time being, limit the field of this survey. No doubt the dramatic career of Dryden is not wholly contained within those years; but the five plays with which this career ends, between 1690 and 1694, may be connected quite naturally with the twenty-three which have preceded them. The works of Dryden, Etherege, Wycherley, Lee, Otway, together with those of their immediate contemporaries, constitute properly speaking the theatre of the Restoration.

2. The Beginnings: D'Avenant. Foreign Influences and National Tradition.—The Puritan Revolution had closed the playhouses in 1642; for fourteen years, no regular performance was given, save in private, or under the menace of the law. In fact, the life of the theatre was suspended. The silence of the stage most certainly was impatiently borne by many; but the supporters of an austere code of morals had thus satisfied an ancient grudge, and the severity they displayed in their control of manners made any protest futile in advance. In 1656, the secret lassitude of all wills was growing patent enough, or the rule—however glorious—of the Protectorate was tending plainly enough to a political and social relaxation, for a skilful man to turn the obstacle which no one dared attack openly. Sir William d'Avenant,[1] the author of plays staged before the Civil War, Poet Laureate under Charles I., closely associated with the royal cause, obtained permission to open to the public an "allegorical entertainment by declamation and music, after the manner of the Ancients" (*The First Day's Entertainment at Rutland House*). This first and discreet attempt, rather hazardous, however, if one stops to ponder over certain remarks of Aristophanes, the advocate of theatrical art, was followed the same year by a more ambitious show, *The Siege of Rhodes.*

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[1] 1606–68; *Dramatic Works*, ed. by Maidment and Logan, 1872–4.

One of the main influences that are preparing a new phase in dramatic art is here clearly apparent. D'Avenant had resided in France; he had come into contact there with an artistic and literary atmosphere rich in germs: that of the restless but fertile period when classicism was flowering into full bloom. To England he brought back many confused ideas and preferences, the product of which is a hybrid work, of still uncertain character. In *The Siege of Rhodes* are to be found suggestions furnished by Corneille, with his conception of love and of noble sentiments; next, the rather similar inspiration of the romances of Gomberville, La Calprenède and the Scudérys, which were already popular in England; lastly, a taste for the opera, which was being implanted in France with the Italian plays of Mazarin's day, and with the *Andromède* of Corneille (1650). And mingling with these elements, we find memories of the national theatre, under the form in which it was kept alive, about 1640, by the degenerate disciples of Fletcher.

The first part of *The Siege of Rhodes* is divided into "entries," like the ballets of Benserade, which were the rage at the court of the young Louis XIV. It is written in rhymed verse, in a very free and variable measure, adapted, as the author tells us, to the demands of the recitative, then a novelty in England. As for the subject, it is "heroic," and destined to recommend virtue "under the forms of valour and conjugal love." A naïve sincere ardour, in which one feels a youthfulness of spirit, despite its consciousness of self, animates this romantic work, clumsy in places, but at times raised by the lyricism of honour and passion. It can be regarded as the germ both of English opera and of heroic tragedy. While the scenic displays, the wealth of accessories, the striving after great picturesque effects, the "machines" (on a narrow stage the town of Rhodes, the port, the fleet, and the camp of the Turks, had to be presented either together or successively) were not unknown to English dramatic art before 1656, it is none the less true that through its material figuration also the play caused a sensation, and marks a date. Lastly, if it is not a fact that an actress appeared in it for the first time in England, it is certain that an English actress played one of the leading parts, and that this daring and almost unprecedented step became a common feature of the Restoration theatre.

Before 1660, d'Avenant wrote two other plays of the same kind, and tried, by selecting national themes, to prevent the possible revival of Puritan susceptibility. When the king's return brought with it the liberty of the theatre, he with Thomas Killigrew was given charge of one of the two troupes of actors, and one of the two playhouses, which were authorised by letters patent.

In order to understand the development of dramatic art under the Restoration, one must imagine these two "companies," that of the king and that of his brother the Duke of York, gathering together talented actors, such as Betterton, and actresses, such as Nell Gwyn, whose charm just as much as their stage gifts made them the idols of the public. Greedily attracted to long-forbidden pleasures, elegant society crowded to the plays, which very often were honoured by the favour and the presence of the king; the theatre now became, for the young noblemen, both a fashionable amusement, and a daily occasion for meetings and intrigues. The brilliant house, frequented even by the wealthy and cultured part of the middle class, and where Pepys, a citizen of London, liked to rub shoulders with the upper world, and to catch a glimpse of the king's favourites, is one of the main social centres of this age, just as it is morally its most complete symbol. The passion for an art, rendered the more pleasing because it has in it the value of a protest, expresses a political preference, triumphs over despised enemies, and gains its freedom at the expense of a conquered austerity; the attraction of unbridled modes of living which actors and spectators encouraged one another to exemplify, and to applaud; the atmosphere of gallantry which reigns in the theatre—all these influences explain the cynicism, and the success, of a literature that is singularly free, crude in its boldness, insolent in its self-assertion, and seeming always to pursue, over and above the direct expression of itself, the confusion of an abolished régime of ideas and sentiments that had long been tyrannical.

By this moral reaction, this psychological release, the Restoration theatre is an outcome of the movement itself of national life; it is an aspect of the new age. But in the dramatic form with which it invests the common spirit of the time, it shows itself wholly impregnated with foreign influences. No other literary kind reveals to the same degree the range and the variety of the suggestions which, coming from the Continent, are spreading at this moment over intellectual England.

It is with France that these contacts are most numerous and easily established. Exiles like d'Avenant, Waller and Denham bring back with them a taste which has been made more precise and strengthened along its own spontaneous lines; in addition, models, images and rhythms. The king and the Court have a more superficial but just as decided instinct for the same refined, noble, correct art, for the same elegant and luxurious existence; an all-powerful and universal magnetism makes the Paris and the Versailles of Louis XIV. the centre whence politeness and culture radiate, and towards which the desire for a more perfect civilisation converges from every side. Classical tragedy in France shines with a bright effulgence; translations have already revealed Corneille to English readers, and soon the tragi-comedies of Thomas Corneille, the heroic tragedies of Scudéry or Quinault, the comedies of Molière, and even, though later and with less keenness, the purely French art of Racine, are all eagerly welcomed and imitated. Their prestige is strengthened by that of kindred or similar forms, such as the romance, the opera, and the ballet. If the influence of France on the dramatic literature of the Restoration has been exaggerated, or expressed in too simple terms, it is because other influences, and notably that of national tradition, have been sometimes neglected, or examined too cursorily. But the precise examples, the definite traces of imitations and borrowings, are so numerous; so strong is the general sense of a diffused suggestion, of an analogy of atmosphere, which the relative parallelism of the contemporary developments of the two peoples does not sufficiently account for, that one cannot hesitate in locating at this point one of the most certain international transfers of influence in European literature. With d'Avenant and *The Siege of Rhodes,* there opens a phase in the history of English drama characterised by the ascendency of the French model; and this phase, despite some interruptions, was to last for a whole century.

In borrowing from Corneille something of his romantic pride, and of his rhetoric of feeling—while not the serious and Descartes-like doctrine underlying all his drama, his theory of will, his notion of love founded in esteem and reason—it is a little of the spirit of Spain that d'Avenant found in the French writer; and Spanish influence, whether direct, or derived through the literature and genius of France, is an element of the original character of the Restoration theatre. This influence, like a recognisable vein, had run through the English drama since the time of the Renaissance; but it remained superficial, and, generally speaking, influenced scarcely anything save the plot or the exterior delineation of the characters, not the deeper substance of the works. After 1660, the tastes of the Court and of the king tend to favour plays which are full of movement, in the manner of those shows where the "comedia de capa y espada" had triumphed in Spain; and a definite Spanish origin can be assigned to plays such as Sir Samuel Tuke's *Adventures of Five Hours,* or George Digby's *Elvira.* Elsewhere, the derivation is only partial, and limited to some episodes, as in Wycherley's *Gentleman Dancing-Master;* but it is most often indirect, and still points to the popularity of the French model.

Leaving out France, it is in national tradition that one must look for the true sources of the new English theatre, and indeed for the main sources. Restoration drama and comedy are the outcome of a state of manners and of a state of mind; and these manners just as this mind, however strong may be the stamp of foreign influence, are the issue of an inner original rhythm of the English genius. It seems preferable to say only that this rhythm calls for and permits, after 1660, a diffuse and sometimes deep action of the literary or social impulses that come from France; and therefore, that the affinities which are thus revealed ought to enter into the very definition of this phase, and be reckoned among its characteristics.

For the theatre in particular, it is possible to retrace the stages of the development which leads from the last years of the Renaissance to the Restoration. Before the banning of plays, the life of drama, weakened by an inward exhaustion, had already sought refuge in the complication of the incidents or the plot itself. The outcome of Beaumont and Fletcher's art was tragi-comedy. At the same time, a kind of romantic infection, a fashion of adventure, of high-sounding and complacent heroism, had spread all over Western Europe. The spirit animating the French Fronde, the romances of chivalry, the epic poems, the plays of Hardy, Rotrou and the young Corneille, is like a sort of second youth, proud and somewhat quarrelsome, on the eve of classical maturity and balance. Already the signs of this spirit had appeared before 1640 at the Court of Charles I.; it comes with the exiled Cavaliers to the Continent, in as large a measure as they receive it there; even those who remain in England feel it rise from the irresistible suggestions of their age, despite the austere sobriety of a Puritan régime. King Charles II., on his accession to the throne, instals it in favour; among the courtiers, the Court ladies, the men of fashion, the poets and authors, a chivalrous gallantry, the love of great exploits, a language strewn with hyperboles, a lofty tone, and a rather hollow pretension to heroism as to tender love, in their contrast to the deep cynicism of this age form an organic group of moral traits, and an essential part of the physiognomy of the time. The reason is that England, like France, then lives through a period of disturbed intellectual exuberance, when the romanticism of intellect, of style and imagination replaces that of feelings, which is becoming exhausted, and that of will, which is condemned by the century in its progress towards reason and order. During this transition which goes from Fletcher to Dryden, the daring refinements of the "metaphysical" poets, and the lyricism of the Cavalier poets, well show in what direction the inner trend of contemporary thought is setting.

Thus, heroic tragedy itself is not exclusively the result, in England, of French examples; it has its true roots in the evolution of the national mind. D'Avenant, before the triumph of the Puritan Parliament, and before his stay in France, had written masques for Charles I., and the English masque may be regarded as one of the origins of the opera. He had written dramas in which the exalted inspiration of honour and love made itself felt (*Love and Honour,* 1642, etc.) ; he puts them on the stage again after the Restoration, and their tone chimes with that of the new theatre. The first plays of Killigrew (*The*

Prisoners, The Princess, etc.), performed before the ban upon the theatre, appear as stages in the same transition.

The courtiers of Charles II., besides, do not only look with favour upon the plays written to flatter their preferences; but they extend a welcome to the repertory of the English Renaissance. No doubt, it is partly through necessity that, from 1660 onwards, Fletcher and his predecessors are again taken up: was not theirs a fund which could be drawn upon, while waiting for the poets to bestir themselves? On the other hand, it is only too certain that the taste of the epoch judges and classifies the masterpieces of the great dramatists from a strange angle of vision. Beaumont and Fletcher are favourites with the public; Ben Jonson, the particular idol of scholars, and praised on every occasion by the critics, follows them very closely. Shakespeare, whose greatness is only felt by a few, pleases the crowd by the secondary aspects of his genius; he is disconcerting to an average though educated mind, such as that of Pepys, more often than he is a delight.[1] The limits of incomprehension seem to be reached when theatrical managers and authors rival one another in adorning *Macbeth* with ballets, or transforming *The Tempest* into an opera. Dryden himself quietly shared in these profanations. The successes won by the Elizabethan drama under the Restoration seem due, very often, to the superficial resemblance of its romanticism with the cheaper fanciful instincts of the time; to the appetite of a public eager for sensations, rather than to a sincere understanding of its inherent qualities. But when all is said, this drama was there, revived again and again, recalling itself to eye and ear alike; the soundest sensibilities were able to feel its incomparable radiance; and the continuity of a national art forced itself upon all as a living tradition. By the very fact of its assertion, it became, in large measure, a reality.

3. Heroic Tragedy: Dryden, etc.—The main substance of heroic tragedy is contained in the work of Dryden. If he is not the creator of it, he raises it higher than anyone else, and leaves it at the moment when, after a very brilliant vogue, it has ceased to please.

It is difficult to exactly determine the origin of this dramatic kind; many threads go to compose its texture, and many hands have woven it. In one sense, it represents the completion of a long development, and unites the most diverse influences—those that have just been enumerated. On the other hand, the writer who best knew how to manage this form—Dryden—attributes its most direct parentage to Sir William d'Avenant, in *The Siege of Rhodes*.[2] But d'Avenant, he says, has not had the ability or the courage as yet to pursue his effort to its end; he has not given his play all the wealth of incidents, the boldness of plot, the variety of personages, which an heroic poem permits and demands; now, heroic tragedy is nothing else than a poem which has been made manifest to the eye. Love and valour will therefore be its mainsprings, just as with Ariosto; the sentiments, and the style, will freely attain to a grandeur quite beyond the actual mediocrity of human life. And the measure of the play will be the rhymed couplet, which has won a place for itself on the stage, and will henceforth rule over tragedy. It has been said that rhyme is unnatural, and distant from actual conversation: it is therefore all the more fitting, in order to raise actions and images alike above the banality of everyday existence. No doubt it has its difficulties; but no one is forced to express himself in rhyme; and such as have been refused this gift will be wise if they abstain from attempting its beauties or incurring its risks.

The Siege of Rhodes, revised, increased by a second part, and staged mag-

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[1] *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is "the most insipid, ridiculous play that ever I saw in my life" (29th Sept., 1662). *Othello* was only "a mean thing" after the *Adventures of Five Hours,* by Tuke (20th Aug., 1666).—For Pepys and his diary, see below, chap. v.

[2] Essay on Heroic Plays, preface to *The Conquest of Granada,* 1672.

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nificently in 1662, better merits in its more developed form the historic honour which Dryden assigns to it. But other authors can advance their claims; for example, Roger Boyle, Count of Orrery, whose *Henry V.*, *Mustapha* and *Black Prince,* written in rhymed couplets, were played at uncertain dates between 1662 and 1667; and Sir Robert Howard, Dryden's own brother-in-law, with whom he collaborated in 1664 in a play which some regard as the first really complete heroic drama (*The Indian Queen*). Already in 1664 Dryden himself had produced an example, though not of the same kind, yet of the most closely related, tragi-comedy, in *The Rival Ladies.* He was to come back to this on several occasions in the course of his career, and even down to his last years (*The Maiden Queen,* 1667; *The Spanish Friar,* 1681; *Love Triumphant,* 1694); but for a time, it is upon heroic tragedy, properly so called, that his effort is almost exclusively concentrated; and in this we find his most brilliant work: *The Indian Empress,* 1667; *Almanzor and Almahide, or The Conquest of Granada,* in two parts, 1669 and 1670; *Aureng-Zebe,* 1675.

It is easy enough to judge these dramas, provided one examines them in themselves, and avoids comparing them with the very different ideal of French classical tragedy. They are, first and foremost, romantic; in this sense, they would approximate to the English theatre of the Renaissance; but their romanticism is impoverished by the exclusive preoccupation of producing a single kind of effect, just as it is not without being shackled, for all that, by the new attention to rules.[1] If one had to look for analogies in Elizabeth's time, they would be found in the *Tamburlaine* of Marlowe, rather than anywhere else. The aim of these plays is to give to sensibility, imagination and the senses, strong impressions of a surprising and superhuman grandeur. In France, Corneille also, it is true, had based tragedy upon admiration; but he had put all the intellectual quality of his Descartes-like thought into the emotion of a soul overwhelmed by the beauty of noble sacrifices; esteem, with him, was the fruit of a reason sublimated into moral passion, and in this way it bound up the desires of the heart with the decisions of conscience. And if the hero merited our entire sympathy, it was because his nobleness was a conquest, the reward of a cruel struggle against himself. All this subtlety and, it must be said, this idealism, are absent from Dryden's notion of heroism; this, no doubt, does not resolve itself completely into mere physical courage and great strokes of the sword; but its spiritual value seems to depend chiefly upon the lack of any struggle, and upon a victory immediately won over nature and over the flesh.

Such a shifting of the centre of gravity gives back predominance to imagination and sensibility; and even with an Aureng-Zebe, the most inward of Dryden's heroes, the one in whom virtue is endued with the most distinctly psychological quality, one can say that generosity is the inborn and purely impulsive gift of temperament. It is not certain but that this view may be after all the truest and the deepest; but here it has scarcely any philosophic value, as it is not the outcome of any deliberate choice; and above all, it has hardly any dramatic worth; its repeated affirmation, at moments of supreme crisis, rouses our admiring wonder, rather than it touches us with a heartfelt admiration.

Other consequences are of a still more serious nature. If heroism has its way without a struggle, it is always equal to itself; with the result that there is a fatal resemblance between the heroes. This dramatic kind was so soon exhausted, because it is afflicted with an unconquerable monotony. Excluded from the core of the work, as from the characters, the element of variety seeks refuge in the incidents; the plot, and the material devices—exoticism, staging, machines, etc., assume the importance which the superficial forms of romantic drama have always given them. Finally, the style has to suffice for effects of intensity, which the purely moral force of conflicting sentiments cannot any longer supply; so that nobleness tends towards bombast, and vigour towards frenzy. This inner degeneration of false grandeur, on the stage, is so constant, and such a commonplace, that it is unnecessary to dwell upon it. Nothing is easier than to underline the defects of Dryden's heroic tragedies. Let it suffice to say that they are great, and such as one would expect.

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[1] In the preface to his *Maiden Queen,* Dryden presents the play as regular according to the strictest laws of drama.

But their outer and, as it were, surface romanticism has the qualities of its defects. A certain imaginative infection emanates from these dramas; they transport the mind into a domain of superiority that is somewhat unreal, but where it is not unpleasant to let one's self be persuaded that one actually penetrates; life there has splendour and beauty; the suggestion of generosity which radiates from it may very well be hollow: in its intention it is true, and while it is felt to be illusory, one yields to it in a certain measure. A sincere romanticism is never entirely a question of words; the reader of these plays finds himself moved at times, and moved in a manner that is inspiring. Lastly, the diction is almost always sonorous, often firm and nervous, with a dense, concentrated power which is evocative, just as much as it is expressive; it has even at times those sudden flashes of poetry which, lighting up the drama, reveal such vast glimpses at one stroke. This style is by no means pure; it still drags along many a trace of bad taste—conceits, affected tricks of all kinds. But it is the style of a great writer, who, if he has not yet mastered his best form, is already himself.

The brilliant success of these dramatic ventures, in which he had no rival, despite the account to which his competitors turned some ephemeral stage triumphs, seems to have inspired Dryden with a feeling of confidence in his own powers, which at times got the better of the safety of his critical judgment. The dedication of *The Rival Ladies* to Lord Orrery (1664) not only justified the use of rhyme in tragedy, but even went to the length of recognizing in it a useful and necessary check on the exuberance of the poet's imagination.

No doubt, the celebrated *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1668), in dialogue form, of never-flagging interest, brings to the discussion of the problems of drama the breadth of view which Corneille had exemplified in his *Examens* and *Discours*. Here Dryden shows the most original and permanent groundwork of his thought; that realistic understanding of the special qualities and claims of the English national art, in which his incertitudes were finally to find rest. He explains here very skilfully the diverse aspects of the truth; the advantages of the Ancients, and those of the Moderns; the foundation of the unities and of the rules in nature, and the eminent virtues of the French theatre. While he borrows something from all those theses, including the last, he pays a warm tribute to Shakespeare, Fletcher and Jonson, and praises them, not only for their substantial accord with the rules, but also for the free genius which has permitted them to find these in themselves. Nor is his justification of rhyme in any way dogmatic; it was not necessary, he says, to our fathers, if we prefer it to-day; and its relative constraint answers to the self-ruling emotion of a more conscious art; the rhythmic scheme, besides, must be free, varied by enjambments and half-lines.

But the epilogue to the second part of *The Conquest of Granada* flatters the public at the expense of the just claims of the past: a more polished age knows merits which were unknown to a rude epoch, and to a yet unrefined language; a Dryden is a better poet than a Jonson, since his audience demands more from him. . . . These remarks having called forth some epigrams, Dryden repeated his argument in the *Essay on the Dramatic Poetry of the Last Age* (1672), in which the superior merits of the present are established by means of a too facile enumeration of the faults which spoil, for example, the "vulgar" diction of *Measure for Measure* or *The Winter's Tale.* . . . Thus, at the summit of his dramatic career, and championing a form of art which, he affirms, is "the most pleasing that the Ancients or the Moderns have known," Dryden does not rise above the common thought of his time.

Such a success, however, had in it something artificial. The taste for the "heroic" is still very strong at the beginning of the Restoration; but it is contradicted by the cynicism and the critical spirit of a rational age; while the first tendency, here rather superficial, is a survival of the past, the second is in deep harmony with political and moral realities, and has the future on its side. Great sentiments and paraded virtues form a strange accompaniment to the mockery of *Hudibras.* The frivolous, sceptical public which relished Butler, without always understanding him, and which applauded the light comedy of the Restoration, could not raise itself for long, even were it through a complacent imagination, to the sublimity of Almanzor (*Conquest of Granada*). Early enough, the dry irony of the period revolted against a dramatic kind which, stuck-up in an attitude of affected pretentiousness, offered itself broadly and freely as a butt for ridicule. Soon after 1660 George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham,[1] formed the project of writing a satirical play in which the bragging note of the new drama would be scoffed at; he had collaborators, among whom, it is said but without any solid proof, was Butler himself. D'Avenant or Sir Robert Howard was, at first, to be parodied; but the repeated triumphs of Dryden pointed him out as a fitter object for attack, and it is he especially, under the name of John Bayes,[2] whom *The Rehearsal* (1671) assails.

The hero, Drawcansir, is a replica of Almanzor; very obvious allusions are aimed at the personages, situations, and themes of Dryden's theatre, or of other writers. A work of rather mediocre fancy, devoid of any moral bearing or deep artistic motives, the play is often witty and amusing; some hits have the direct accuracy which results from a sharp perception of exaggerations or incongruities; and the harmony of the thesis with a certain average good sense lends it a force that it does not owe fully to its merit. Hateful and ridiculous, the portrait of Bayes is too scathing to harm Dryden, who was wise enough not to see himself in it. But despite its scurrility, the comic vein in *The Rehearsal* sprang from the very nature of things, and served its purpose.

It did not kill heroic drama. For ten years, said Buckingham, we have listened to rhyme, and not to reason: "Pray let this prove a year of prose and sense." The wish was perhaps granted; but after an interval in which he had taken up in prose the defence of his Almanzor, Dryden wrote *Aureng-Zebe.* This play, it is true, already marks a transition towards another ideal. In it the tragic element is purer, and one has even been able to discover a distant influence of the sober art of Racine. Despite its numerous shortcomings, the style has often a classical restraint; the versification shows more freedom, and blank verse even reappears in places. The character of Aureng-Zebe, with the nobleness and the gentleness of a knight without reproach, is almost a fine thing. On the other hand, the comic elements are developing, less, it seems, in the direction of tragi-comedy, than towards the unconsciously imitated model of Shakespearean drama; the happy ending decidedly takes us away from heroic tragedy. Finally, in the prologue, Dryden says that he is tired of rhyme, confesses that he is full of shame "at Shakespeare's sacred name," and marks his own place between two periods of poetry, "the first of this, and hindmost of the last." The return to the deeper inspirations of national temperament could not be more clearly indicated.

The decisive proof was not long in coming (*All for Love,* 1678). But in a dramatic species akin to that which he abandoned from now onwards, Dryden was still going to produce an interesting work. His career, moreover, follows a sinuous line, full of such turns. *The Spanish Friar* (1681) has all the characteristics of tragi-comedy; two plots are combined in it, one principal and tragic, the other comic and secondary (this latter, in fact, being here the better part of the play, as it is the more developed); and Dryden justifies this mixture in principle (Dedication of the work) by arguments in which is expressed the innate preference of English genius for the mixed forms of dramatic art. Besides, he upbraids the turgidness of a style that is falsely heroic, and makes no exception in the case of his own *Conquest of Granada.* Lastly, the piece is written in blank verse and in prose. Thus the evolution of his taste is leading him to greater sobriety, as to a deliberate independence of "rules." In spite of the momentary variations of his thought, chiefly in the expression which he gives it, it has henceforth found a fixed centre to revolve upon.

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[1] 1628–1687.

[2] This name signifies "laurels"; Dryden was Poet Laureate from 1670.

Heroic tragedy, meanwhile, was reaching the final stage of decay, dying from an inner exhaustion which Buckingham's satire does not seem to have much hastened. *The Empress of Morocco* by Settle (1673) had been very successful; *The Destruction of Jerusalem* by Crowne (1677) did not reawaken the languishing interest of the public. While the influence of the heroic kind is still to be felt in Otway and in Lee, it is with them permeated by a very different spirit, which leads us back towards older and deeper elements of English dramatic tradition.

4. Comedy: Etherege, Wycherley, Shadwell, etc.—Restoration comedy came into being just as early as heroic tragedy. It was no less a natural issue of the general influences of the time, and it was still better able to satisfy contemporary tastes. The spirit of comedy is essentially a social thing; it develops through the reciprocal observation of characters, the refining of the critical sense, the fixing of conventional values. A Court, a society that prided themselves upon their intellectual elegance, would make mockery fashionable: does it not call forth all the vivacity of wit, the gift of joking, the art of neat speech? All the circumstances which favoured satire, also favoured the satirical notation of manners; and the stage offered the easiest as well as the most pleasing field for the collective exercise of ridicule. So that from 1660 onwards there is a revival of Ben Jonson's "humours," as much as of Fletcher's dramas. After several tentative efforts, Etherege and Wycherley create, in different but analogous moulds, the new type of comedy.

Before them, some attempts had been made, where most often is still felt the paramount influence of Ben Jonson, but where other traits are discernible, called into being by the new circumstances.

During the first years which followed the Restoration, one satirical theme dominates all others: the raillery aimed at the fallen Puritan régime. Such was the trend of the deep reaction of the national spirit; and the playwrights, who had been silenced by their adversaries, were even less inclined than others to pardon them. Therefore, a whole group of plays, with or without the accompaniment of orthodox Royalist sentiments, give vent to a scornful condemnation of religious and moral hypocrisy.[1] Among them is to be noted the work which reveals the vigorous talent of John Wilson (*The Cheats,* 1662). Here is a full-flavoured, realistic commentary on the great Puritanic fraud, which makes one think of Butler. As in *Hudibras,* the pious pretence of the preacher, Scruple, is bound up with other vices or other lies which group themselves naturally round it: the usury and sneaking corruption of Alderman Whitebroth, the charlatanry of the astrologer-doctor, Mopus; and the casuistry, implicit or open, which had been the outcome of the great effort of the "saints" to build up life on the repression of instinct, is denounced by the very arguments of Pascal.[1]

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[1] For example: *The Rump, or the Mirror of the Late Times,* by John Tatham, 1660; *The Committee,* by Sir Robert Howard, 1665, etc.

Dryden, meanwhile, turns first of all his versatile talent to comedy (*The Wild Gallant,* 1663); the play is mediocre, and this first dramatic attempt does not even hold much promise for the future. This was not the field in which he was to win his triumphs; but one may not take him at his word when, in his critical treatises, he declares that he is incapable of achieving any success in it (*A Defence of an Essay of Dramatic Poesy,* 1668); the comic scenes of *The Spanish Friar* show that he knew how to imbue such work with racy verve and a quality of genuine invention.[2] However the case may be, in the intervals of drama-writing, Dryden managed to pen several comedies. Here he displays an even more marked freedom of tone than in his tragedies; the more noticeable, as he claims not to use the gross methods of farce; and as his dialogue sometimes, for instance in *Marriage-à-la-Mode,* has brilliance and drollery.

Immediately after Dryden's earliest attempts, the first play of Sir George Etherege[3] was staged; and a truly new note was struck this time. Restoration society, with its cynical, frivolous elegance, bore in itself the suggestion and at least the confused ideal of a light and witty art, where comedy, freed from all moralising realism as from all doctrinal intention, was no longer anything else but the mocking image of a care-free life. To catch these manners in their actual colouring, to attribute to them only the character that is essentially theirs, and to diversify their immorality with the lively variations of fancy, was at the same time to give a picture of them, to extract their philosophy, and to satirise them in the only way that was fit. In order to have the intuitive sense of this attitude, and of the resources it offered to art, a poet must possess a personal experience and the love of fashionable life, the keen perception of finer shades, the gift of expression. Etherege has all the sprightly ease, and intimate knowledge of the elegant world, called for in this type of the comedy of manners. A born writer, he sojourns in France, where he steadies and still further sharpens his faculty for irony and epigram.

Is it possible that he there became acquainted with the work of Molière, and owed something to his influence? Such has not been proved. But in the vivacity of turn, the easy dialogue, a certain sober precision, his work bears the very evident mark of French influence. The originality of Etherege comes, above all, from his temperament; still, his temperament could but be encouraged, developed in a literary atmosphere with which it offered such complete affinities.

The perfection of this type, however, is not reached at one stroke. *The Comical Revenge* is an unequal play, still encumbered by an admixture of tragicomedy; the parts written in rhymed verse are feeble, but the prose moves with a very pretty deftness. The work is already quite artificial, without substance, but animated by a felicitous touch of gay cynicism, and of light-heartedness; while the character of Sir Frederick Frollick is the first sketch of the young impertinent fop, who is destined to be the favourite hero of Restoration comedy. *She Would if She Could* marks a decisive progress; the writer has found himself, and is conscious of what he wants and of what he can do. It is entirely and unreservedly the piquant mockery of fashionable vices, the occasion for a satire that is evidently working hand in hand with what it pretends to be engaged in condemning. The tone is still more cynical, the liberty of language more light and witty. Although the dissimulated coarseness only breaks out in sudden and brutal sallies, the abdication of all moral exigencies will never be more complete. *The Man of Mode* is the example of an art that has reached the perfection of its form, and in which the poverty of the matter, of observation, is revealed in a somewhat dry precision of outline. In contrast with Sir Fopling, the exquisite infatuated with French fashions, Dorimant represents a more subdued and more national replica of the same type; for already the reaction of patriotic instincts against the excess of foreign influence is here perceptible, as in the theatre itself of Wycherley. But the coxcomb is buoyed up by a disdainful gaiety of ridiculous spirit, an impudent liveliness, which blunt the edge of comedy; and the satire is lost in the merry play of a fastidious irony.

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[1] *The Provinciales* had been translated into English as early as 1657 and 1658.—From the same J. Wilson, in 1665, we have a comedy, *The Projectors,* which is strangely analogous to the *Avare* of Molière (1668), a coincidence that cannot be explained by the common imitation of Plautus. The problem requires investigation.

[2] *Sir Martin Mar-All,* adapted from the *Etourdi* of Molière; *The Assignation,* 1672; *Marriage-à-la-mode,* 1672; *Limberham,* 1678; *Amphitryon,* imitated from Plautus and Molière, 1690.

[3] Born about 1634, he resided for a considerable time in France; wrote three comedies: *The Comical Revenge, or Love in a Tub,* 1664; *She Would if She Could,* 1668; *The Man of Mode, or Sir Fopling Flutter,* 1676, and some light verse; sent as diplomatic agent to Ratisbon, he exchanged with his friends, among them Dryden, an amusing correspondence, and died in Paris, it is believed, in 1690. *Works,* ed. by Verity, 1888.

The resemblance with the brilliant, fine art of Congreve is striking; and one would be tempted to over-emphasise the fact, if one did not notice in Etherege a more forward note of disrespect, a more pronounced debauchery in thought, something younger, and also a less sustained brilliance. There is also a suggestion, in certain words, of a secret sense of the vanity of cynicism, and, as it were, of an ill-satisfied longing of the heart. But this is only in a kind of farther background, and scarcely perceptible.

Congreve was to take up the comedy of Etherege, and enrich it, raising it still higher. The inspiration which animates the robust and biting plays of Wycherley[1] is quite different. With him, satire remains just as far from an austere ideal, and lets itself be carried away by the enthusiasm of a gay immorality; but the game is no longer self-satisfying. The elements of an inner protestation show themselves: the revolt of a strong personality, with an inner bent to bitterness, against the madness which is sweeping it along, and which it judges while giving itself up to it. In the realism of Wycherley there is a violence in which can be seen, not an exasperated cynicism, but the impetuosity of a scorn, all the more frank in that it has no appearances to save, and does not except itself from what it condemns. It is the elementary moral reaction of a nature that is not wholly bereft of all sense of a moral life. To venture farther would be hazardous; nothing in Wycherley reveals a romantic sensibility; and his gaiety is not the ironical mask that would serve to conceal a secret melancholy. But one has too often erred in the opposite direction; one has only searched in his work for a baseness of soul and the cold desire of scandal. The coarseness of his plays is at once due to an observation of manners, to the desire to please public taste, and to the insulting mockery of this taste as of these manners. And if, finally, a play, the intention of which is not by any means dishonourable, happens to be far from edifying, it is because the author, just as the society to whom he addresses himself, has lost the very sense of delicacy and shame.

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[1] Born in 1640, in Shropshire, came of an old family, sojourned as a young man in France and frequented the salon of the Duchess de Montausier, where he found an atmosphere impregnated by the spirit of the Hôtel de Rambouillet. Returning to England at the Restoration, he entered upon a life of pleasure in London. The success of his first play *Love in a Wood,* staged in 1671, brought him into touch with the Court. *The Gentleman Dancing-Master* (1671 or '72), *The Country Wife* (1673), *The Plain Dealer* (1674), followed in quick succession. Then Wycherley retired from the stage, contracted a rich marriage which proved disappointing, traversed a period of financial embarrassment, and lived until 1715, enjoying the pleasures of his literary friendships. In his last years, he was connected with Pope, to whom he submitted his poems for correction. *Plays,* ed. by W. C. Ward (Mermaid Series), 1888. See Chas. Perromat, *Wycherley,* Paris, 1921.

In this lies first the interest of Wycherley's work. He fulfilled all the necessary conditions to give a true picture of a social reality that was limited, particular, but intensely characteristic: he was a man of the world, part and parcel of its life; and, on the other hand, his temperament had sufficient solidity to ensure him his independence, a personal angle of vision, distinct from that of the rake, similar enough to that of the average man. Less indolent and less of a dilettante than Etherege, he paints in stronger colours, and lends a greater relief to everything; and what his art emphasises, is just the original traits of his epoch, drawn with a touch both frank and insolent.

His comedy thus shows us a state of manners, the field of which, narrow in itself, requires defining: the court, the fashionable centres of the capital; but the example of which radiates even to the farthermost parts of the provinces, and there creates, as it were, superficial contagions; attracts to it, on the other hand, moral elements of the same nature; and thus does play the part of that typical form of civilisation, in which an age can most often be summed up. Young noblemen, dressed in the French style, beribboned and bewigged, straining after wit and very susceptible about their honour; ladies for whom face patches and rouge have no longer any secret, and provocative beneath the enigma of their masks; burgesses, as greedy as they are crafty, anxious, and not without reason, about the chastity of their wives; plays, pleasure haunts, fashionable groves and gardens; suggestive conversations, intrigues, billets-doux and appointments—it is like a fairly brilliant copy, but overcharged and carried to a brutal licentiousness, of gallant life such as the personal tastes of Louis XIV. encouraged. Wycherly has described all this in a lively, animated, coloured picture, no doubt intensified by the optics of the stage, but in no way exaggerated. There is skill and talent in the portrait, despite the fact that it is simple and even rough in its manner; and the painter has known how to bring in individual traits to set off general effects; how to catch, as for example in *The Gentleman Dancing-Master,* the craze for foreign customs, French or Spanish; or, as in *The Plain Dealer,* the features of lawyers and of their victims.

The art of Wycherley, robust as it is, is often rudimentary. His plays have conspicuous faults. From the first to the last, no doubt, there is evidence of a marked progress towards the emancipation and purification of the form. The plot in *Love in a Wood* is of a quite superficial complexity, from which the succeeding comedies tend to free themselves. But the action still is moved by rather conventional springs, and develops according to rhythms that are expected and monotonous; the tricks of construction are crude. There is no very fine psychology in the delineation of character, and it is rare when the personages cannot be summed up in one single trait. The best known, such as Widow Blackacre (*Plain Dealer*), are the puppets of too obvious automatisms. Finally, the author's numerous borrowings, chiefly those he has taken from Molière, enable us to make comparisons which are not usually to his advantage. Whatever may be thought of *The Plain Dealer,* it seems difficult to see in it, as certain critics have, an improved replica of the *Misanthrope.*

But, on the other hand, Wycherley has solid merits. The surest is the truth, the life of the dialogue, its self-impelling force which, as with Molière, makes one retort produce another; the verve which infuses an irresistible movement into many scenes, and draws new effects from banal situations. The dryness of the moral atmosphere is at times mitigated by a breath of freshness, all too fugitive, as at certain moments, around the figure of Hippolita (*The Gentleman Dancing-Master*). And the pleasant, gay play of wit, in some episodes where the pleasure-seekers vie each with the other in conversation, comes upon us as a kind of release, which somewhat soothes the crudity of the rest. But the most original quality in Wycherly, and the surest sign of the secret idealism of his thought, is the philosophy which instils an after-taste of healthy bitterness into the cynicism, and makes the character of the Plain Dealer, despite everything, a strong and personal creation; the symbol of a furious, incoherent, powerless anger of the traditional English temperament, against the treachery of a refined corruption which captures it through the senses, dominates its intellect, and leaves nothing free save the fitful straining of its will. Popular instinct has not erred in the matter; much more than the rather effaced personage of Freeman, the Philinte of Wycherley, it is Manly, a brutal and ferocious Alceste, who represents the troubled, violent depth of his experience of life.

Restoration comedy is a fruitful kind of literature. Society furnished for the amusement of an idle public certain general oppositions, such as that of the fashionable circles, to which the greater part of the spectators belonged, and of the town middle class, which remained in the majority faithful to the spirit of Puritanism, and which the theatre shows us in the most malevolent light. From those antitheses, and from the situations they naturally lead to; from the spectacle of elegant debauchery in its struggle with vulgar hypocrisy; from the theme of conjugal misfortune, above all, treated endlessly under all its aspects, are born the ordinary types of the plot, to which the imitation of the foreign theatre brings the chance of renewal, and elements of particularity. Few of those plays are really of no value to the historian, so naïvely faithful is the testimony they bring concerning the manners or spirit of the epoch. A study of less limited proportions than the present would distinguish in them, besides the comedy of manners—the most interesting—that of "humours" derived from Jonson; that of plot for its own sake, imitated from Spain; that in which farce is the dominant element; lastly, that in which we have a foretaste of sentimental seriousness.

Several works, however, cannot be passed over in this rapid survey: *The Mulberry Garden* (1668) of the poet Charles Sedley,[1] which, with its amusing figures of young coxcombs, its witty repartees, continues the first efforts of Etherege, and seems to mark the transition between them and the earlier works of Wycherley; *Epsom Wells* (1672), *The Squire of Alsatia* (1688), and *Bury Fair* (1689), of Shadwell,[2] plays heavily written, clumsily constructed, but curious on account of the picture they give of realistic scenes—watering-places, the lower life of London, popular festivals; *The Rover, or The Banished Cavaliers,* a play in two parts (1677–80) by Mrs. Behn,[3] who by her varied production, her coloured descriptions, her lively dialogue, her adumbration of feminism, her relative decency of bearing, is an original figure in the literature of the time; and *The Country Wit* (1676), *Sir Courtly Nice* (1685), of John Crowne,[4] where the invention is rather droll, and the tone still very far from delicate, but where the political themes, the moralising intentions, reveal in a way the secret working of minds.

Very diverse elements, for the most part borrowed, and associated indifferently in a loose action; feebly conceived characters, who almost always can be reduced to types so often repeated as to become conventional; verve, movement, sometimes wit, a force of comedy, exterior but undeniable; realism, scurrility, licentiousness; all of it significant, artistically poor, but rich in documentary value; such is, generally speaking, the comedy of the Restoration, as soon as the two or three main personalities are left out of account.

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[1] See above, chap. ii. sect. 6.

[2] Thomas Shadwell, 1642–1692. *Select Plays,* ed. by Saintsbury, Mermaid Series, 1903. It seems difficult to find in him a writer of the first order, or to pronounce him, despite certain analogies, a predecessor of Congreve. (For the opposite argument see A. Nicoll, *Restoration Drama,* 1923.)

[3] 1640–1689. See chap. ii. sect. 6. *Works,* ed. by Summers, 6 vols.

[4] 1640–1703(?). *Dramatic Works,* ed. by Maidment and Logan, 1873–77.

5. The National Reaction in Drama: Dryden, Lee and Otway.—Between 1675 and 1680 a marked renascence of the national spirit reveals itself in English literature. The inevitable reaction of the deeper instincts against the excess of worldly corruption, and the very first signs of a moral awakening; the political opposition to the Government of Charles II., the Protestant unrest, the agitation which precedes and accompanies the "Popish Plot"; the shame of the subjection, suspected, if not fully known, of the English monarchy to France, and the fear inspired by the ambition of Louis XIV.; lastly, the fatigue which was at length provoked by the dominating influence of French art and fashions; all contribute to this secret movement towards the re-possession and re-assertion of the national self, which will not henceforth be checked, and of which the Revolution of 1688 will be the decisive success. This reaction is clearly visible in the drama, and more especially can be seen in the work of Dryden.

Some signs, at an earlier date, had pointed to it. Side by side with heroic tragedy, so steeped in a foreign spirit, could be found the survival of the Elizabethan tradition, very badly understood it is true; and new authors had tried to revive it. Here again we come upon the name of John Wilson. His *Andronicus Comnenius* (1644) is a forcible drama, of a concentrated intensity, of a firm style, which by striking analogies recalls Shakespeare's *Richard III.*, and through its merits bears such a comparison without dishonour; but which, to be classed as worthy of Shakespearean lineage, lacks only the highest poetic imagination. Save for a very short passage, it is written in blank verse, of fine quality.

The return to blank verse is the sign of the decisive evolution in the dramatic career of Dryden. Scarcely three years after *Aureng-Zebe,* he is treating a subject upon which Shakespeare had placed his mark; and without plagiarising, through the very force of his personality, he extracts from it a tragedy, the merit of which may have been exaggerated, but which wins our keen approval, if not our admiration (*All for Love*). "In my style, I have professed to imitate the divine Shakespeare; which that I might perform more freely, I have disencumbered myself from rhyme" (Preface). The verse, indeed, if it has not yet all the desirable ease, gains from this liberation a suppleness of movement, in which English criticism seems rightly to see a necessary condition of tragic style.

At the same time, Dryden's critical essays reveal the change that has taken place in his thought. The preface he wrote for his adaptation of *Troilus and Cressida* (*The Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy,* 1679), shows throughout a just, strong, and yet qualified appreciation of all the greatness of Shakespeare. Between the classical doctrine, derived from Aristotle, explained by Le Bossu and Rapin in France, and by Rymer in England, to which Dryden wishes to remain faithful; and, on the other hand, the technique of the Elizabethan romanticists, he here establishes a deliberate reconciliation. The irregularities of Shakespeare are admitted, accounted for from the point of view of his time; and the superiority of his genius is established in relation, either to the moderns, or to his contemporaries Fletcher and Jonson, or even to the ancients. And in the eyes of Dryden, it is Shakespeare, no doubt, who is thus reunited with the true classicism, of which he appears the supreme representative; but, in fact, classicism thus broadened is no longer the ideal which English tragedy during the last twenty years had seemed to follow; for Dryden places the deeper vitality of the Shakespearean plays in the creation of characters, and this creation is the work of intuition, not of analysis. Such an inner difference betrays the essential divergence of the two arts, and is reflected in other planes —that of action as that of form. To exalt Shakespeare to the highest degree of dramatic genius, is to propose a model other than that of the unities as understood in France; and of these unities, Dryden now admits but a broad and free application. He claims that the mind of the English requires the mixture of comedy and tragedy (Preface to *Don Sebastian*).

Even to the close of his life, his critical doctrine was subject to fluctuation; and his practice was to be in no wise different. The last twenty years of his career are very mixed; already *Troilus and Cressida* remodelled Shakespeare rather irreverently; an opera, *Albion and Albanius* (1685), and a dramatic opera, *King Arthur* (1691), appear to be little else than sacrifices to contemporary taste. A drama, *Cleomenes* (1692), is conceived and written, with a certain nobility and purity of line, in close imitation of French tragedy. But these various forms are animated by a new spirit of freedom and artistic virility, to which the use of blank verse, henceforward strictly adhered to (save in opera), only gives a tangible expression. This spirit is to be found concentrated in the tragic parts of *The Spanish Friar;* and, above all, in a fine drama, *Don Sebastian* (1690), where the action undoubtedly still recalls tragi-comedy, but where serious scenes, of a sober pathos, alternate without clashing with episodes of frank and crude gaiety. This play is, perhaps, the model of what the dramatic art of Dryden could produce; it is a romantic work, but of a high romanticism, and in which are to be felt broad horizons of thought as of heart.

Other writers obey the same influences at the same time. Between 1675 and 1685 one witnesses a momentary revival of the English drama of the national type, or rather, of a mixed type, in which the national element becomes again more consciously essential. The tragedies of Crowne (*Thyestes,* 1681, etc.) are hardly to be connected with the Elizabethan tradition, save in the rather clumsy search for effects of imaginative horror. With Lee and Otway, the connection is more brilliantly patent.

Nathaniel Lee[1] is a singular and pitiable figure. The stamp of an unbalanced nature is upon his talent and his work. His short existence was darkened by mental troubles, his end hastened by excesses. He seems to have led, like Wycherley in his youth, a life of feverish excitement and pleasure; and like him, to have reaped from it a sense of bitter disgust (Dedication to *The Rival Queens*). But this duality of soul is here much more pronounced; and Lee is properly speaking a romanticist.

He is, above all, a belated Elizabethan. In him reawakens the temperament of some among the decadent dramatists of the Renaissance, with their tendency to frenzy and morbidity. This reviving is natural; but one also feels it to be, in some measure, artificial or at least voluntary, stimulated by a fashion of the day, by the success of heroic tragedy. This is the kind in which Lee makes his first attempts; then, at the same time as Dryden, he modifies his manner, and adopts blank verse. We really have here the rejection of a discipline, and the return to more instinctive habits. *The Rival Queens, Mithridates, Lucius Junius Brutus* may have found their subjects in ancient history (or in the contemporary French novel), and make a naïve display of erudition: one cannot conceive of plays less classical. The construction is weak, the psychology almost always rudimentary; and the style, setting aside the work of twenty years, is full of a bombast, a conceit, a bad taste, which take us back to the very eve of the Restoration.

This impulsive liberty spends itself in fiery flights of imagination. The images of Lee are of an extravagant audacity, and animated by an extraordinarily sensual ardour. At intervals this frenzy becomes more sober, or better inspired, and then we are surprised by effects of energy, of suggestive power, of poetry, which recall the Elizabethans in a striking way. Or at times the East is evoked with a warmth and a grace that are young and full of fancy, recalling the touch of Marlowe. But these flashes of intuitive, spontaneous art are rare; the texture of the plays is of an almost purely verbal intensity, the exaggeration and monotony of which are extremely fatiguing. And in spite of all, the literary consciousness of an already critical age, the atmosphere of reason in which these furies resound, communicate to them something indefinably paradoxical. It seems safe to suppose that Lee's sickly, nervous exaltation is the genuine tone of his sensibility; but he lets himself go without the least control, and loses all idea of measure or decency. The way in which he has transposed the *Princesse de Clèves* is a scandal in art. His work remains interesting as a psychological problem; aided by the playing of great actors, his violence found favour on the stage; but if the renaissance of national tradition had not had any other expression, it is not certain that it would have been fruitful. . . .

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[1] Born about 1653, a graduate of Cambridge, he essayed acting as a profession but without success; his first play was *Nero* (1675); he then wrote heroic tragedies (*Sophonisba, Gloriana,* 1676); next came dramas in blank verse: *The Rival Queens* (1677); *Mithridates* (1678); *Theodosius* (1680); *Cæsar Borgia* (1680); *Lucius Junius Brutus* (1681); *The Princess of Clèves* (1681); *Constantine the Great* (1682). He was confined in a madhouse in 1684; was liberated in 1689, and died as a result of his drinking excesses in 1692. *Works,* 2 vols., 1713; 3 vols., 1734–6. See the study by Auer, Berlin, 1904.

The still somewhat feverish, but more balanced talent of Otway[1] has better justified this rebirth, and given it its masterpiece in drama. His career, parallel with that of Lee, traverses fairly analogous phases; if he adopts blank verse at a slightly later date, it is as the result of a ripe decision, and in full possession of himself. Among his heroic tragedies, *Don Carlos* has some merit; but his other attempts are negligible, and everything is eclipsed by the two dramas, *The Orphan* and *Venice Preserved,* the brilliant and the durable success of which still assures their author of a living fame. It is even permissible to think that the first of these plays is, really, not on a par with the second. *Venice Preserved* is a unique achievement, and must be looked upon as such; a solitary work, unequalled in the half-century which preceded it, or in the century which came after. Its importance in literature is none the less for it; because if it remains exceptional by its quality, it is not so by the inspiration that animates it. The tragic temperament of Otway is a last excrescence of the Elizabethan vein, on which the various influences of the time have strongly left their mark. It is not of a different nature from that of Lee; it unites scattered tendencies; one might say that it eminently represents the short and late reawakening of the dramatic genius of the Renaissance. It is significant that the Restoration, in its troubled and still ill-assured rationalism, should have experienced such a survival of the romantic past.

The most curious feature of the work is the intimate and coherent fusion of this romanticism with something at least of the classical spirit. Despite the frenzied outbursts of *Venice Preserved,* there is evidence of a certain disciplining of the intellect. The intense pathos of the drama is carried on, managed, according to a clever progression, though at times it goes beyond the limits of moral sensibility, and has recourse to wholly physical means. Otway's rhetoric is able to adapt itself to the jerks, the sudden breaks of a passionate, breathless dialogue. His verse, more unequal and rough than that of Lee, has solid merits. There is a sequence, as there is a depth, in the characters. The play is really built upon a psychological base: it is the tragedy of friendship, stronger and higher than love. The action, rapid and concentrated, leads on to an inevitable catastrophe; a bitter, sad emotion radiates from each stage in the unfolding of the fate at work, even if the painting of tenderness and of its sorrows appeals less to the heart than to the nerves.

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[1] Thomas Otway, born in 1652, took to acting like Lee; despite several brilliant successes, his life was one of struggle, and he died in poverty in 1685. His career opened with heroic tragedies in rhymed verse: *Alcibiades*, 1675; *Don Carlos*, 1676; he translated the *Bérénice* of Racine and the *Scapin* of Molière; wrote mediocre comedies (*The Soldier's Fortune*, 1681; etc.); and two tragedies in blank verse: *The Orphan*, 1680; *Venice Preserved*, 1682. *Select Plays*, ed. by Roden Noel (Mermaid Series), 1891. See the studies by de Grisy, Paris, 1868; Luick, Vienna, 1902.

Despite weak points, lengthy passages, some rant, the play as a whole preserves a fine artistic tenor. The violent, cruel realism of the comic parts, where, under the name of Antonio, the Earl of Shaftesbury is put on the stage, does not destroy the sombre atmosphere of the drama; and the effect of harmony through contrast is faithful to the very essence of Shakespearean æsthetics. The most penetrating note of the work is a kind of bitter pessimism, whose personal, tormented accent is explained by the life of Otway, by his unfortunate passion for Mrs. Berry, and his approaching death.

To be consulted: Beljame, *Public et Hommes de Lettres en Angleterre, etc.,* 1897; *Cambridge History of English Literature,* vol. viii. chap. v., vii.; Canfield, *Corneille and Racine in England,* 1904; Charlanne, *Influence Française en Angleterre au xvii*e *Siècle,* 1906; Courthope, *History of English Poetry,* vol. iv., 1903; Eccles, *Racine in England,* 1922; Fitzmaurice-Kelly, *Relations between Spanish and English Literature,* 1910; Genest, *Some Account of the English Stage from the Restoration . . . to 1830,* 10 vols., 1832; Hazlitt, *Lectures on the English Comic Writers,* 1819; Harvey-Jellie, *Les Sources du théâtre anglais de la Restauration,* 1906; Macaulay, *Essay on Leigh Hunt* (the Dramatic Works of Wycherley, etc.), 1841; Miles, *The Influence of Molière on Restoration Comedy,* 1910; Nettleton, *English Drama of the Restoration, etc.,* 1914; A. Nicoll, *History of Restoration Drama,* 1601–1700, 1923; Palmer, *The Comedy of Manners,* 1913; Pendlebury, *Dryden's Heroic Plays,* 1923; *Restoration Plays,* etc., introd. by Gosse (Everyman's Library), 1912; Schelling, *English Drama,* 1914; Ward, *History of English Dramatic Literature,* 1899.

CHAPTER V

RATIONALISM AND RESTORATION PROSE

1. The Philosophy of Reason; Hobbes, Newton.—The rational character of the Restoration is clearly seen in the domain of general ideas on man, nature, and society. During the reign of Puritanism, the spirit of the Middle Ages had returned in strength against modern science and philosophy, to which the work of Bacon had given a decisive expression. The Civil War and the Protectorate coincide with a revival of scholasticism, a vogue in astrological studies, and a flourishing of all popular beliefs. The return of the king, the re-establishment of moral and social values upon traditional and fixed bases, give sovereign scope to the psychological reaction which is inevitable; an immense craving for lucidity and order tends to institute Reason as the legislator of thought as of life.

But it would be easy to exaggerate the philosophic consequences of this craving. The rationalism of the Restoration is much more a diffuse quality, the most common element, perhaps the main element, of inward attitudes and acts, than it is the inspiring force of a great number of systems. The aversion of the English temperament to abstract, hard doctrines, its preference for the concrete, its docility with regard to experience, are already racial traits. Here rationality is most often found associated with empiricism, stretching it, if one may so say, to its highest reach, but not leaving it behind to the point of opposing it. On the other hand, religious authority, civil power, and even manners, however free these may be, repress the boldest ventures of opinion and of language, and, above all, the written and published formula of extreme conclusions; the taste for, and cultivation of, prudent compromises continue to exist, even in an age which has carried boldness of speech and laxity of morals to a degree never before witnessed in England. While pure rationalism is the actual practice of a fairly large number of thinkers, fewer are found to profess it.

Despite these reserves, the fact remains that a broad and deep current of rational thought derived from the sources themselves of the Renaissance, flows on throughout the first half of the seventeenth century, below the stream of Puritanism, and its course attains the second half without being broken. Scarcely has Cromwell consolidated his personal power, when it again comes to the surface. The Restoration allows it to spread out with relative freedom. The intellectual characteristics of this age are thus the issue, not only of a reaction, but of a continuous development, as well as of certain immediate causes.

Bacon had drawn up the programme of the general effort by which modern thought, rebelling against the yoke of scholasticism, was to explore and get acquainted with reality. His doctrine is a force at work everywhere; but he does not seem to have had any immediate successors. On the eve of the Restoration, those thinkers who are tempted by the need for lucidity and order, turn readily to the philosophy of Descartes, which is then radiating throughout Europe. The University of Cambridge, the most active centre of English philosophy at this epoch, is at the same time a focus of rationalist ideas, and the seat of a renaissance of Platonic idealism. With the first movement of ideas can be connected such thinkers as Whichcote; the doctrine of Descartes is in great favour at Christ's College; but Henry More and Cudworth adopt it as a point of departure for original speculations, which are to carry them to different, almost mystical views.

Thus Cartesianism, with its logical severity, has a strong effect upon minds, but stimulates rather than subjugates them. Just as in France, it provokes, in England, an instinctive resistance on the part of such temperaments as are startled by the boldness of its method and of its initial negations, and are not sufficiently reassured by the spiritualistic conclusions it has to offer. On the other hand, this very spiritualism is what alienates the greatest English philosopher of the seventeenth century, Thomas Hobbes,[1] a thinker of exceptional quality, in whom a radical empiricism, pushed to its limit, produces a singular structure of fearless reason and cold practical realism.

The system of Hobbes, although fully worked out in all its parts before 1660, belongs none the less, by virtue of its tendencies, to the Restoration. It harmonises with the scepticism impregnated by science which at that time forms the basis, acknowledged or secret, of many minds. It gives the serious support of a doctrine to the infidelity and free-thinking of the fashionable wits. In the eyes of the general public, it represents the most dangerous effort of Reason against orthodoxy. One of the causes of the relative impunity with which it comes forward resides in the definitely monarchic character of its political conclusions. While it could well be a source of uneasiness to consciences, it served the interests of the sovereign, and consecrated the need for stability in a society that had felt the upheaval of civil struggles. It justified, from the philosophic point of view, the attempt made by the last representatives of the Stuart dynasty to escape from parliamentary control.

Just as with Descartes, it was Hobbes' desire to build up a connected explanation of his thought, and the larger works in which he interprets it follow a preconceived plan. One may see in his metaphysics and in his psychology a first application to the theory of the world and the soul, of the explanatory formulæ proposed by modern physics. The system of Galileo established a mechanical order in the movements of the heavenly bodies. Hobbes reduces all the material universe to movement; and by a daring analogy, attaining at one stroke the most daring views entertained by scientific monism in the nineteenth century, he reduces to the same principle the whole moral universe of mind and society.

Our sensations and our ideas, he says, are bound up with physical causes, and, indeed, are of one nature with theirs. Corresponding to the action of the exterior world upon us, there is on our part a reaction of positive or negative appetite; and a general expression of these desires is the whole law of morality. But while moral law is that of an absolute individualism, life is only compatible with the reciprocal limitation of egoisms. From the natural state of things, which is that of the war of each against all, there necessarily springs a social pact; the individual places himself under the protection of a master, either a personal sovereign or a chosen body, whose power, if it is to be efficacious, must recognise no other rule save that of its own will. The only alternative to the absolute authority of an individual or collective sovereign is anarchy; spiritual power derives all its force from civil power; in the case of a conflict, it is the latter, and not the former, which carries the day. Theocracy, whether Catholic or Puritan, is a monstrous anomaly. In the "kingdom of darkness"—for it is thus that Hobbes symbolises the errors of social organisation—the Church rises up as the rival of political supremacy, of this great collective being, a true "Leviathan," whose gigantic body embraces that of all citizens; and, abusing her spiritual prestige, crushes the growing minds of the young, in the universities, with a science that is wholly verbal. . . .

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[1] Born in 1588, died in 1678, Hobbes formed a link between the Renaissance and the Restoration; travelled on the Continent, sojourned in France from 1640 to 1651, where he made the acquaintance of Father Mersenne and sent to Descartes his objections to the *Meditations*. His doctrines attracted the attention of the Roman Catholic clergy and he returned to England where he succeeded, not without difficulty, in being left alone. After 1660 he owed much to the favour of Charles II. His philosophical works were late productions: *Elements of Law, Natural and Politic* (circulated in manuscript, 1640); *De Cive* (1642; translated into English under the title of *Philosophical Rudiments Concerning Government and Society*, 1651); *Leviathan*, 1651; *De Corpore*, 1655, etc. The last period of his life was spent in controversy and in literary works such as a translation of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, 1676. *Works*, ed. by Molesworth, 16 vols., 1839–45; *Leviathan*, ed. by Walker, 1904. See the studies by G. Lyon (*The Philosophy of Hobbes*), 1893; Sir L. Stephen, 1904; Taylor, 1909; R. Gadave, *T. H. and His Theories of the Social Contract*, etc., 1907; G. Catbin, *T. H.*, 1922.

Such is this doctrine, so bold and so strangely prescient, which seems to anticipate the materialism of modern physics, the sensualist and associationist psychology, the ethics of utilitarianism, and the sociology of the Positivists. In one bound it reaches conclusions of so advanced a nature, that English thought will not follow it. The shock it gives to minds will no doubt be reverberated for a long time; eighteenth-century deism will be much indebted to it. But the more moderate empiricism of Locke will be more directly efficacious. Hobbes, while he is a philosopher, is also a vigorous, clear-thinking writer, of a sobriety as compact as it is powerful, of a logical cogency always firm and always easy to grasp. By virtue of its precision, pruned of all useless ornament, and its restrained note of imaginative ardour, the style of his English works affords an outstanding example of the transition towards classical prose.

The intellectual influences, continental as well as English, which give rise to the doctrine of Hobbes, explain the awakening and diffusion of the scientific spirit in England. From Bacon's time, induction had become a recognized method; the observation of nature was more and more tending to replace scholastic discussions; Harvey had discovered the circulation of the blood. Even in the days of Puritanism, more than one investigator was carrying out secret experiments which had as much to do with alchemy or magic as with chemistry, and which ran the risk of being sternly punished by the secular arm. The Restoration at once brought science into fashion. During his sojourn on the Continent the king had acquired a taste for anatomies; he cuts up bodies for his personal recreation, and his courtiers imitate him. In this atmosphere, the granting of a charter to the Royal Society for the advancement of science (1662) is quite a natural act.[1] Its object is to bring into touch with one another those minds that are keen on the knowledge of accurate facts, chiefly in the spheres of mathematics and physics. It serves to bring together not only those who are scientists by profession, such as Robert Boyle, but men of the world, and writers; Dryden, Evelyn, Cowley, Pepys himself, take an interest in its work. Among its first founders are also to be numbered two future bishops, John Wilkins and Seth Ward. Thus science is henceforth less suspiciously viewed; it mixes broadly with the social life of the time; and the day is no longer distant when it will be considered abnormal for a man of culture to overlook its claims. No doubt, there is still a little naïvety in the attraction which drives certain members of the Royal Society to physical researches; Samuel Butler pens a satire (*The Elephant in the Moon*) against one of them. But the discoveries of Boyle on the relation of the volume to the pressure of gases give the new society every right to be respected. And, in 1672, Newton[2] reads before it his first note on the composition of white light.

Newton has no place, as a writer, in the history of English literature. Latin is the medium which he employs for the work wherein is expounded the theory of universal gravitation. But this discovery, and that of infinitesimal calculation, through the preparatory work leading up to them, through all the movement of thought and research which precedes them, and in addition, through all the controversies which they call forth, fill the last years of the Restoration with a stir of scientific activity. The contemporaries feel that something great is in the making, that the efforts of "mechanical philosophy" are unravelling the secrets of the universe. Reason now definitively establishes its claims to direct thought as well as life. Henceforward, this thesis is no longer disputed; the eighteenth century, and the age of classicism, find in it one of their essential certitudes.

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[1] Its origin dates back to 1645; the register of its meetings begins in 1660.

[2] Sir Isaac Newton, born in 1642, died in 1727. His great work: *Philosophia Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, was published in 1687.

2. Religious Rationalism; Barrow, South, Tillotson, etc.—Religious thought, in its turn, becomes impregnated with the rationalism of philosophy and science. Within the Anglican Church, the "latitudinarian" tendency is already in evidence during the troubled period that precedes the Restoration; in Cambridge it numbers several illustrious representatives, such as Whichcote. In its beginnings, it is connected by intellectual affinities with the Platonism of More and Cudworth; but soon the rationalistic current and the mystic current diverge; the latter, menaced by the withering atmosphere of a hostile age, seeks a course apart, and must be considered as one of the various intellectual movements in deep disagreement with the spirit of the times.

The latitudinarians tend to broaden Christian doctrine; they lay stress upon common beliefs, upon what unites sects, not what divides them. Their notion of faith and its proofs thus develops towards a pure matter of reason; they react against the enthusiastic zeal of the Puritans, against the extreme forms of the personal interpretation of Scripture. They provide the connecting link between science and religion; Whichcote's desire is to apply the inductive method of Bacon to apologetics; Joseph Glanvill, chaplain to Charles II., is a member of the Royal Society. Despite the attacks directed against it, the latitudinarian spirit spreads; it is the natural corollary of the tolerance towards which secular society is tending, and which is established by the Revolution of 1688; lastly, it inspires most of the Restoration theologians and preachers.

Theirs is a theology of Reason. The most vigorous and, no doubt, the most typical of these Christian thinkers, Isaac Barrow,[1] is the predecessor of Newton in a Chair of Mathematics at Cambridge; he disserts upon the mysteries of faith with all the rigour of a scientist. A demonstration, with him, never loses sight of the ideal of a series of terms logically connected. His *Commentary on Dominical Prayer* explains the duties of love and charity as obligations of clear-sighted wisdom; the *Commentary on the Decalogue* transposes all the Divine Commandments into appeals to good sense, to which an upright mind cannot turn a deaf ear. The treatise *On Papal Supremacy* is a long argument of severe sobriety, and one that aims at being wholly scientific. Belief here is a purely intellectual thing; it is the outcome, with an absolute necessity, of an enlightened judgment; accurate formulæ can take in all its substance. Thus, the element of mysticism is effaced from religion; the very passage in which St. Luke puts into the mouth of the angel the "glad tidings" of the Nativity, serves as matter for a wholly rational development.

But theology most often is merged in ethics. The latter are frankly utilitarian. Barrow insists in the most simple and direct way upon the advantageous consequences of virtue; to render unto God and unto men what is due to them is to acquire, without the fear of any possible disappointment, a claim to a substantial reward, wherein the good things of this world have their part, just as those of the other. Here again, everything is a matter of reason, of intelligence; morality is a question of self-interest wisely understood. A Providential association connects success, fortune, honours, a long life, and immortality, with the practice of certain rules which are taught by tradition, and which reflection establishes. An active and sensible life of industry is thus, whatever happens, the path to salvation.

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[1] 1630–77; sojourned in Paris, and travelled in the East; was Professor of Greek, then of Mathematics, and Master of Trinity College, Cambridge; a member of the Royal Society. His theological works comprise nine volumes (ed. by Napier, Cambridge, 1859).

There is nothing less mystical than this notion of ethics; nothing which better corresponds, in return, with the deepest and most stable instincts of the average English conscience, which reaches its mature stage at the very moment when the spirit of modern England is definitively finding itself. The contemporaries and rivals of Barrow do not teach any other form of wisdom. South[1] studies the conditions of durable pleasure, and finds them in a judicious moderation. Tillotson[2] renders thanks to God in that He has concealed from the wicked the advantages of uprightness, whilst according to the just a better understanding. . . .

South, Tillotson and Stillingfleet[3] were primarily teachers. With them pulpit eloquence acquired a brilliance which, in the last years of the seventeenth century, was thought dazzling, but which has since singularly paled. Their art shows negative qualities; a faculty of clear reasoning, of sensible argumentation; a well-behaved soberness; something easy and intelligible, persuasive even, provided the mind is not overruled by any hot conviction. These lucid and candid expositions, devoid of any sectarian narrowness and free from any passion of enthusiasm, appeal to the understanding of a reasonable age, and strengthen it in the decisions of its practical will. They have in them a sound rhetoric, and, at times, a logical cogency; but nothing that resembles the noblest flights of oratorical inspiration.

This medium eloquence, which often appears cold to us, is not, however, to be despised. Sometimes one can feel in it the pent-up warmth of an inner fire, the ardour of a moral radiance. No matter how intellectual Barrow may be, there is in his work an animation, the source of which lies in a hidden sensibility. Tillotson, who was looked upon as the great Christian orator of the time, is at most a good writer of sermons; but his contemporary, South, is a genuine writer, whose vigour, breadth, and imaginative language preserve a reflected glow from the poetry of the Renaissance.

Generally speaking, the style of those theologians and preachers finds its chief merit in the quiet facile light that plays upon it. Despite lingering traces of preciosity or pompousness, it has a markedly modern character. Supple and orderly, composed of well-balanced elements, and either of short sentences, or of adjusted and constructed periods, it is one of the major signs, as it is an instrument, of the progress of classical prose. Dryden liked to acknowledge his debt to Tillotson; and it can be admitted that he did owe him something; though this homage probably is no less generously exaggerated than that which he paid to Waller, when he extolled the fecundity of the poetic example the latter had set him.

3. History: Clarendon, Burnet. Memorialists: Evelyn, Pepys, etc.— The Restoration is an age of history, as of satire and comedy. The critical activities of thought, the application of an awakened reflection to events and to men, a more conscious interest taken by life in itself, go to explain the simultaneous development of these kinds which are linked up by an obvious affinity. Society was emerging from a period of dramatic restlessness; after having lived through or experienced great happenings, people would readily indulge in the pleasure of recording them. A new era was beginning, and the present was opening up more widely towards the future; stimulated by the feeling of this novelty, and of a quicker political and moral change, observers frequently set to work to note the visible stages of the movement, and the facts of every day. Thus, the general progress of thought and analysis inclines men's minds towards giving a clear account of the past; and the curiosity inseparable from an age of transition urges them to place upon record the detailed history of the present. Historians, writers of diaries and memoirs, are now numerous.[1]

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[1] Robert South, 1634–1716; lived at Oxford, where he was the recipient of academic honours and ecclesiastical prebends. His *Sermons* were published in 4 vols., 1843.

[2] John Tillotson, 1630–94, after a Puritan youth, rallied to the Anglican cause in which he represented the latitudinarian tendency; became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1691. His sermons were widely read and admired in his day and during the ensuing epoch. *Works,* 10 vols., 1820.

[3] Edward Stillingfleet, 1635–99, Bishop of Worcester; published in 1662 *Origines Sacræ,* a rational explication of the Christian Faith. His sermons, which were highly esteemed, and his controversial works propound the Anglican doctrine of the golden mean that lay half-way between Roman Catholicism and the liberalism of Locke. *Works,* 1710.

Clarendon, the statesman, and High Chancellor under King Charles II., infuses into his account of the Civil War, of which he had been a witness, the spirit of the Restoration in politics and religion.[2] A party man, of penetrating discernment and wide culture, he looks upon history as a kind of arresting statement, explicative and persuasive, in which the regard for truth is subordinated to the interest of art and to the service of a cause. His great work, begun in 1646, is already modern by the breadth of the perspective, the careful planning of the whole, the handling of details, arranged in narratives that are long and full, and yet never wander. We have not here the deep probing after causes, the philosophy of a revolution; the information, wholly personal, is on a broad scale, but fallible, as the author's memory must be; conscientiousness, and the scrupulous attention to truth, are here neither a rule nor a torment; the narrator has not the sense of what objective research could be; he submits, in all good faith, to the requirements of the cause he is pleading. But it is pleaded with fullness, with a partiality that most often remains sober and becoming, and with a certain epic nobility of thought that rises above all petty rancour and paltry passions. The interest of the pictures as of the narrations is only superseded by that of the portraits, broadly set up in full-length sketches, with method and care; of a fairly penetrating touch, that often attains to the soul, but where we feel that sympathy alone is the measure of justice, and that wherever it is lacking there is a distinct falling-off. The portrait or "character" is then in fashion; Clarendon had been able, during his stay in France, to see finished models of it; his own are drawn with obvious literary scruple, and rare felicity.

While by his analysis and lucidity he can be ranked as a modern, his style shows him to be still a transitional writer. Flowing along in an even, easy movement, his prose tends visibly towards the disintegration of periods, but remains periodic; this basic hesitation between an old and a new syntax makes it appear somewhat disjointed; moreover, the logical relations of the successive elements are awkwardly shown. Despite this embarrassment, the whole reads pleasantly, thanks to its variety, animation, and gift for picturesque precision.

One generation separates Clarendon from his inevitable rival, Gilbert Burnet.[1] The latter, by his mental outlook, still belongs to the Restoration; but it is with the classical age that this period is connected through his work. His first writings are anterior to the Revolution of 1688; he completes, shortly after 1700, the part of his great work which deals with the reigns of Charles II. and James II., and carries his narrative farther up to the Treaty of Utrecht, shaping its course on that of events themselves. The progress of criticism with him is evidenced in a more modern conception of history.

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[1] To this date also and after an obscure evolution of half a century can be traced the rise of the modern press. The need felt by the educated classes to be put into touch with the important news of the moment, and this with sufficient guarantees, favoured the creation and success of the *London Gazette* (at first the *Oxford Gazette*), 1665. For an account of this, see the *Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. vii. chap. xv.; and Williams, *History of English Journalism to the Foundation of the Gazette*, 1908.

[2] Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, born in 1608, was one of the advisers of Charles I. in his struggle with Parliament; accompanied the Prince of Wales abroad and returned with Charles II.; High Chancellor until 1667, then an exile, he died in France in 1674. His *History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England*, etc., was not published until the accession of Queen Anne, 1702–4. Into this work he had written much of his own biography, which, at a later date, was issued separately. *Miscellaneous Works*, 1851.

Burnet remains, above all, a moralist; his object is to instruct and edify his reader; to make known, as he says, "men and councils," leaving the gazettes to deal with the facts themselves. But if he aims at showing the inner forces at work, and seeks to judge souls, he does so with a keen desire to be impartial, "representing things in their natural colour, without art or artifice," with no regard whatsoever either for family ties or friendship, or for interests or parties. Has he kept strictly to this programme? More objective, no doubt, than Clarendon, Burnet did not escape the reproaches of his political adversaries. Less of an artist than his predecessor, he is not appreciably inferior to him in the penetrative skill of his portraits, which reveal a shrewd, pessimistic, and discriminating fund of psychological experience. His language, in one part analytical and balanced, remains in another inorganic and heavy, and still reminds us of that of Clarendon, without, however, possessing the other's force of imaginative suggestion. It bears the visible stamp of a more positive age, and of a drier thought.

Among the numerous memoirs of the Restoration, two biographies constitute in themselves a separate group; the general resemblance of their subject-matters associates the one with the other, and also the piquant contrast of the personalities therein revealed. The *Life of Colonel Hutchinson,* by his widow,[2] and the *Life of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle,* by his wife,[3] the duchess, are written at the same time; the first between 1664 and 1671; the second during the years preceding 1667. They paint two interesting figures for the historian, and set up in a natural opposition the traits of the Puritan, of ordinary birth, who builds up a life of political zeal and moral scruple upon the uneasy authority of conscience, and those of the great Royalist nobleman, a brilliant figure, expansive, in whose nature there still remains something of the old-time spirit of chivalry. But above all, these two parallel works reflect the characters of their individual authors. Mrs. Hutchinson and Lady Newcastle add to the piety of their conjugal affection a claim to culture and intellectuality which, for the time, remains exceptional, being outside the regular scope of feminine life; and this original ambition develops, with the one, into a feeling of self which is repressed by austere principles, but which is not altogether free from pride and hardness; with the other, into a somewhat extravagant preciosity, through which there comes out the charm of a rich and curious spontaneity. Neither the one nor the other is a writer of great talent; but Mrs. Hutchinson uses a careful, energetic style, a trifle oratorical, the syntax of which, however, is often impeded; while the Duchess of Newcastle owes the attraction of her pages to an ease which is wholly impulsive, and more in keeping with the irregular flow of a prose influenced but slightly yet by the spirit of classicism.

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[1] 1643–1715; a Scotsman, he upheld the cause of the Episcopalians; after 1674, became a preacher in London, was very popular, and gained the favour of the King, but lost this when he adopted an independent attitude towards the Duke of York and the attempts at a Roman Catholic Restoration. He advocated tolerance, sided with the Whig party, and was soon obliged to flee the kingdom; joined the court of William of Orange in 1687, returned to England at the Revolution of 1688, and became Bishop of Salisbury. His important work is *The History of My Own Time,* a posthumous publication, 1724–35, which aroused a series of spirited discussions in political circles and was severely attacked by Swift and the Tory party; ed. by Airy, 1897, etc. In addition to numerous treatises, sermons, biographies, etc., mention should be made of the *History of the Reformation of the Church of England,* 1679–81; ed. by Pocock, 1875. See the biography of Clarke and Foxcroft, 1907.

[2] Lucy Apsley, born in 1620, married in 1638 John Hutchinson, who played a rather important part in the Civil War, on the side of Parliament, and died in prison (1664). His biography, accompanied by several pages in which Mrs. Hutchinson describes her own youth, was not published until 1806. Ed. by H. Child, 1904; ed. by Firth, 1906.

[3] Margaret Lucas, while in Paris in 1645 married William, Marquis and later Duke of Newcastle, who was a staunch supporter of the royal cause; she was also a playwright and after the Restoration figured as a great literary lady. She died in 1673, having compiled a biography of her husband during his lifetime; this appeared in 1667. Ed. by C. H. Firth, 1906.

The *Mémoires du Comte de Grammont,* by Hamilton,[1] belong to French literature. The *Memoirs* of Sir John Reresby, the *Journal* of Lady Warwick, the *Memoirs* of Lady Fanshawe,[2] all show the fertility of this kind, to which any artistic intention is often quite foreign. The desire to tell the story of one's life, or to fix in writing the varied, ever-changing traits of an age when the course of things is speedy and rich in incidents, when the individual throws off the shackles of former constraints, lies at the root of this fecundity, which, from now onwards, will be a permanent characteristic of literary production. But two diarists, Evelyn[3] and Pepys,[4] have merited a place apart through the exceptional value of the substance of their works, and also through their personalities.

Evelyn is interesting. Historians give great credit to his precise, detailed narrative, which aims only at exactitude, and yet will offer notations that go beyond mere facts, opening up new perspectives. The story of his travels is a mine of information about France, Italy, and Holland in the middle of the seventeenth century; and the idea that we can form of English life under the last kings of the Stuart dynasty and William III. owes much to his pages. His personal choice leads him to observe natural phenomena, art curiosities, technical works, manorial residences and their gardens, rather than the motives prompting human actions or the politics of states; his attention to things is that of the erudite, enlightened virtuoso, who is more attracted by the secrets of the universe than by those of souls. But his very wide experience brings him into contact with many aspects of society, and there is none upon which he does not shed some light.

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[1] Anthony Hamilton, of Scottish parentage, spent the greater part of his youth in France, and at the Court of Charles II. found himself again in an atmosphere saturated with French influences. Whatever the part which one can attribute to the Comte de Grammont himself in the story of his adventures, this extremely witty work is one of the most remarkable examples of the perfect assimilation of a foreign language with all its genius, all its finer shades of meaning. Written about 1701, it was published at Cologne in 1713. The English translation appeared in 1714; ed. by Goodwin, 1903. See the study by Ruth Clark, 1921.

[2] Reresby died in 1689; his *Memoirs* were published in 1734; ed. by Ivatt, 1904. Lady Mary Boyle, the sister of Robert Boyle and of the Count of Orrery, married Charles Rich, Earl of Warwick, in 1659; her Diary, which covers the period 1666–72, was published in 1848. Ann Harrison married in 1644 Sir Richard Fanshawe, who was an active agent of the royal cause and Ambassador in Portugal and Spain. He died in 1666; the *Memoirs of Lady Fanshawe,* of great historical interest, appeared in 1829; new edn., 1907.

[3] John Evelyn, born in 1620, came of a wealthy family, travelled on the Continent, served the cause of the King, and after the Restoration filled several public offices, becoming an active member of the Royal Society. At Sayes Court with its famous gardens he led the life of a country gentleman of letters, the liberal protector of art and science. His *Diary,* which only sums up his early memories, assumes the character of a detailed account of events from 1641 onwards, and is continued, on a varying scale, until the year of his death (1706); it was published in 1818. Ed. by A. Dobson, 3 vols., 1906. Evelyn himself published numerous works, e.g. *Sylva,* 1664. *Miscellaneous Writings,* 1825. See *The Early Life and Education of John Evelyn,* ed. by Maynard Smith, 1920.

[4] Samuel Pepys, born in 1632, of lower middle-class family, experienced early hardships, pursued an honourable and useful career as an official, connected with the Navy Office, became Secretary of the Navy, and President of the Royal Society. He died in 1704 after having traversed a series of new trials, the result of political crises. He retained in English history the features of a mere official until 1825, when his *Diary,* written in shorthand, was deciphered and published, revealing the most intimate secrets of his whole personality. It covers the first ten years of the Restoration (1660–69); ed. by Wheatley, 8 vols., 1893–96; new edn., 1923. See R. L. Stevenson, *Familiar Studies of Men and Books,* 1882; studies by P. Lubbock, and E. H. Moorhouse, new edn., 1922.

Even the moral originality of the Restoration is to be seen through the pages of his medley; away from all the rush of Court and town life alike, he reflects the fever of pleasure without actually taking part in it; and his moral perception is not obtuse; he it is who reveals to us, in a Mrs. Godolphin, one of the most upright and most touching characters of an age when noble figures are rare. For Evelyn, a Royalist and orthodox in all his political and religious opinions, has in his temperament the serious disposition, the meditative tendency, of the Puritan. He is, as it were, a brilliant, almost aristocratic example of that bourgeois spirit which is perpetuating the deep-rooted seriousness of the race below the fashionable dissipation of the time, and so forms the link between the austerity of the Civil War period and the moralising attempts of the classical age. The simple, unadorned style of his *Diary* has a relative elegance, and, as it were, a natural correctness; all that is still inorganic in contemporary syntax is here most often redeemed by the lucidity of the thought.

Pepys is a writer of unique interest. In no literature can one find so absolutely sincere a confession; for it was not written with a view to being published, nor even deciphered, and its intention was only to recall the minutest detail of daily life to a personality naïvely fond of preserving and living through it again. It is free from all conscious warping; it does not even offer the unconscious alterations through which the pride of the Romanticist invents or exaggerates the weaknesses and perversities of his own self. Between the mind of Pepys and the hand that pens his thoughts there interposes no moral shame, no self-respect, no desire for self-idealisation; he brings a splendid and perfect objectivity to this record of his life. Thus, we are given the true and complete portrait of a soul; or rather, of what an average soul, that is little anxious to live at a high pitch of concentration, can understand of itself. And as its whole attention is focussed on the outside world, on the field of its daily activity, and the ever-changing setting in which that activity lies, we find in the delectable wealth of these memoirs ten years of the concrete history of England, as seen from a central point by a diligent, assimilating observer, who is enough mixed up with decisive events to have first-hand experience of them, and who, at the same time, keeps sufficiently clear to give us the opinion of the crowd.

The grave, virtuous figure of Mr. Pepys, aureoled in the reflected glow of public dignity and pomp, vanishes at the contact of his own book. Its place is taken by a man who is strangely living and real, because he participates in all the little, illogical, incongruous, unavowed weaknesses of that psychological reality which ethics, decency, and social sentiment mitigate or cover up on every occasion. No realistic novel will ever, in point of accurate truth, surpass the standard of this involuntary art, even though the active analysis of the novelist will often display greater penetration and a farther reach. The being which thus reveals itself, under the crudest light, is that of a man who, mediocre as he is in some of his features, is quite estimable in others, and who bears well this terribly searching scrutiny. Pepys is an encouraging example of humanity as seen without disguise; his instinctive egoism has nothing harsh about it; he is capable of disinterested feelings; his public zeal goes farther than the mere care of his own career, and at times broadens out into a really national concern. Moreover, this administrative and painstaking citizen, formerly of Puritan leanings, and who has become, changing with the times, a lukewarm Anglican, is a lover of music when the mood is upon him, and endeavours to taste the pleasures of the mind; his scientific curiosity, a trifle naïve, is untiring; whether it be contemporary literature, and the theatre, or the scandal gossip of the day, the Court and the town, the information he supplies is that of a man whose sincere desire has been to understand and to feel.

His record, divided up into short notes jotted down from day to day, and as desultory as life itself, wields upon our imaginations the spell of an ever-changing, picturesque spectacle, the dramatic quality of which is increased by its documentary value. Here an epoch revives, and the world of the Restoration assumes once again all its actual interest; we see it through the eyes of a witness. The narration at times develops to the amplitude of great events, and the gossip acquires a touch of dignity when historic scenes, such as the coronation of Charles II., the ravages of the plague, the fire of London, spread themselves out in all their magnitude. In the pages of Pepys there is a style since there is a man, and one who knows how to observe, and note typical details, fix them in words exact, vivid, expressive; there is a writer, although there is not the slightest trace of art. His *Diary* wins and holds us as would that of a child greedy for sensation, who brought the searching mind of an adult to bear on everything. With very little gift for criticism, he is all the more representative of an age in which the desire for truth is still part and parcel of the thirst for the wonderful.

His language, which is entirely spontaneous, has the slips, the abbreviations, the ready-made and passively repeated forms, of the most familiar conversation with one's self. As slightly constructed as possible, it does not react in any way against the dissolution of the former periodic syntax; and the continual jerks of these notes which run on, then stop to start again, ceaselessly bounding off with a broken, quick movement, strike one as revealing the loosest mental and verbal organisation. And yet there is a certain order in this irregular sequence, the direct order of sensation and the association of ideas; and the story as a whole is clear, almost always limpid and easy to follow, no less than it is lively and impulsive. In the pages of Pepys one can detect, along with a transition in grammar, the trend towards the elements of a new correctness, founded upon the spirit of analysis which is already present and active, but which has not yet succeeded, as with the conscious and artistic writers of prose, in freeing itself from the vast and broken mould, the fragments of which it still drags along with it.

4. Moral Analysis; the Essay. Cowley, Temple.—An inner movement carries a literature of critical reasoning to the study of the man within. Psychology—in no way impassioned and intuitive, after the romantic fashion—but analytical, readily deductive, and in every instance preoccupied with the problems of human conduct, is the intellectual activity most proper to classicism, in England as in France. Less pronounced perhaps than in France, for the English temperament is less naturally prone to self-analysis than to the fresh and concrete perception of self, this characteristic, however, is easily recognisable as early as the Restoration period; it will be even more so in the classical age. And, as the English mind regains on the side of practical attention what it loses, when compared with the French, on that of reflective lucidity, English literature, during its rational phase, will be, still more than the French, occupied with public or private morals. After the theologians and preachers, the moralists of all kinds, the political writers, in a word the philosophers of action and of life, abound during the long stretch of years from Hobbes to Godwin.

The moralists had always been numerous. But the new fact to note is that the tone of literature encourages a clear, elegant and pleasant expression of thoughts about man and his fate. What was hitherto marked with the stamp of scholasticism and Church teaching, and bound up with traditional or orthodox forms, is now included more broadly, easily and unanimously in the common domain of the subjects open to all educated people.

The diffusion of psychological enquiries and theses is the salient feature of the seventeenth century in France. By virtue of a parallel course, and also through the effect of French influence, the same tendency betrays itself in England. All the wealth of moral intuition upon which Elizabethan drama had thriven, all the serious fund of the religious conscience which had fed Puritan controversies, now issue out and are transformed; there is a decline in drama, Puritanism suffers an eclipse; but enlightened, judicious, well-bred authors dissert from now onwards on what was lately the substance of instinctive creations, or of heavily learned treatises.

The essay is the branch of literature best adapted to the free expression of a moralising mind. Towards the beginning of the next century it will be carried by English classicism to a rare degree of finish, and will have the value of an original artistic creation. The essay of the Restoration keeps very close to the form given it by Montaigne, whose influence, which for a moment had waned, is now reviving.[1] The subtle analyses of Bacon, invested with a choice, dense, imaginative style, have less of a following than the more simply human words of the author of the *Essais*. Cowley,[2] a writer of the preceding generation, survives the Restoration by several years; at his death, he leaves eleven short familiar talks on moral subjects, interspersed with verse, strewn with anecdotes, and of a remarkably easy movement, where the manner of Montaigne is allied with a personal touch. Here, the note of the new literature is incontestably dominant; erudition, classical reminiscences, and even the liberty of a temperament which gives itself vent, are all unified and enveloped by the charm of a style which has the intuition of measure and order. It is again Montaigne whom one finds in the work of George Savile, Earl of Halifax, who, through his affinities, belongs rather to the following generation.[3] Montaigne's influence is also perceptible in the pages of Temple,[4] who would have been the best essayist of the Restoration, had not Dryden written his critical prefaces and essays.

The essays of Temple are works of estimable merit. Without the erudition of the scholar, he writes history from the point of view of a layman; his *Essay on Ancient and Modern Learning* cannot be defended; but he was able to see the realities of contemporary life, and his political judgments have a certain vigour. In the domain of things moral, he brings the gift of a clear-sighted and calm reflectiveness, without illusion or bitterness; less good-natured than Montaigne, and less forceful than Swift, he sometimes recalls the one, sometimes the other. His maxims have often a happy finesse. Classical in his tastes, and a supporter of the Ancients against the Moderns, he speaks very freely on the question of rules, viewing them in the light of quite negative assurances against the worst errors of art. His thought is none the less of the most purely rational quality, with that practical bent, that attention to health, comfort, and the happiness that can accrue from the little pleasures of life, which are characteristically English, and in which the Epicurean wisdom of Montaigne is given a more utilitarian cast.[1]

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[1] A new translation of Montaigne's work was to be published by Charles Cotton in 1685.

[2] Abraham Cowley, 1618–67 (see Part I.). *Several Discourses, by way of Essays, in Verse and Prose*, appeared in 1668. *English Writings*, ed. by Waller, 1903. *Essays, etc.*; ed. by Gough, 1915; ed. by Lumby and Tilley, 1923.

[3] See below, chap. vii. sect. 3.

[4] Sir William Temple, born in 1628, played a part during the Restoration as a foreign agent, then as a politician; died in retirement (1699). He left behind a fairly extensive work, a part of which was published by Swift and comprises principally, in addition to the essays themselves (*Miscellanea*, 1680, 1690, 1701), political and historical studies (*Observations upon the United Provinces of the Netherlands; Essay upon the Original and Nature of Government; An Introduction to the History of England*, 1685; etc.). *Works*, 4 vols., 1814. *Essays on Ancient and Modern Learning, and on Poetry*, ed. by Spingarn, 1909. See the biography, etc., by Courtenay, 1836; studies by Beavan, Lyttel, 1908.

But these moderate merits are brought into stronger relief by the character of easy balance and supple spontaneity, in which the man and the writer equally share. With Temple, the rationalism of the Restoration appears, as it were, really incorporated with the moral person; it is one with the instinct itself of a nature that finds therein, and without effort, the assured working of sensibility as of intelligence. Practised in this easy way, the new spirit in literature is no longer a fashion, nor an aggressive attitude which still savours of a reaction; it has become a normal temperament. In a sense Temple is the first of the English classicists; and his clear-cut style, unencumbered, simple, smooth but still compact, symmetrical and yet free from monotony, has almost always the rhythm and finish of the best modern prose.

5. Restoration Prose.—An epoch of honourable fecundity, but one in which the summits of art are seldom reached, the Restoration can claim that it prepared the instruments which literature will employ from now onwards. The "heroic" or rhymed couplet, with its cadence, its pauses, the epigrammatic or didactic tone which is proper to it, and the range of its possible effects—a range more extensive, in fact, than that which Pope will use—has been carried by Dryden, after Waller and Denham, right to the state of final elaboration where one can say that a new mould of poetry has been evolved. Admirably adapted to verse of a reasoning, cold nature, this mould is a consequence, in a much broader sense than it will be a cause; the inspiration which has created it will make its lasting fortune, until the day when a new inspiration will demand to have it recast.

The creation of a modern style is a less brilliant realisation, perhaps, but will prove to be more durable. While prose can be animated by the highest poetic sentiment, and while Romanticism will revivify English prose, there are scales of calm and relatively simple effects which the literature of average ambition can never renounce, because it is in them that it has most often to move; for these, it is indispensable to command a clear, easy diction, one that adapts itself without effort to the idea, and that pleases without straining too much after beauty. To forge such a tool will not only mean to realise a progress. As an instrument of art, the prose of the last Elizabethans, of a Jeremy Taylor, for example, had resources which that of an age of reason will no longer possess. But it is in the plane of intelligence and common sense that the great mass of ordinary writings naturally find their place; and the possibility given to these writings of procuring a moderate pleasure, without undue strain, is a permanent conquest, of which the English language has not yet lost the heritage. Time can hardly be said to have left its mark upon the best essays of the Restoration; they read to-day as if they had been written yesterday. The books of the preceding generation, on the other hand, are already clouded over by a mist of archaism.

Among the creators of modern prose, as of classical verse, Dryden must be placed in the front rank; and, indeed, the same deep requirements of thought produce at the same time these two literary forms. It is the spirit of analysis, which is at the source of the one and of the other; or more exactly, it is a general demand for easy intelligibility, of which analysis is at once an immediate consequence and a privileged instrument. In order that there should be clearness, each element of style, the matter offered for each successive act of mental perception, must be short, and easily encompassed by the mind; so that for the sake of economy of effort the long period, just as the huge poetic paragraph, is condemned. The brief sentence, like the rhymed couplet, becomes the normal type of expression.

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[1] Essays on *Gout, Health, Gardening,* etc.

Within the sentence, as within the couplet, there must reign an order that is grasped at first sight; and the relationship of words, as of ideas, must be strongly marked by a firm construction, for elegance and even beauty proceed, above all, from the transparency of the verbal arrangement, and from its perfect coincidence with the pattern of the thought. In poetry, where greater condensation is necessary, where expression has to be chosen and striking, this balance tends to organise itself around fixed relations of weight and mass, of which antithesis is the model. Prose remains more supple, and preserves a relative liberty of movement within the limits of a definite and settled form. Finally, the sentences, like the couplets, link up the one with the other into developments, according to natural and logical progressions, created by the action of a mind that is master of itself, and that passes from one object to another with the full consciousness of whence it comes and whither it is going.

Still animated by an imaginative and romantic ardour, the poetry of Dryden does not realise this ideal in its purity, or rather, it introduces therein artistic suggestions which are foreign, strictly speaking, to the standard it has set up. His prose is much closer to the perfect and stripped simplicity in which the literature of didactic exposition is henceforth to find its uniform type. The essays and prefaces of Dryden are often written with an absolute propriety of terms, joined to a sovereign ease, and move, in their smaller constituent parts, with an infallible sureness. It is in the building up of the whole work that this art is still at fault; it is not yet free from digressions and incertitudes; it has not lost all its fanciful spontaneousness. But it is, none the less, an art that is almost complete, and the example of a literary tradition that is being created at this time never to be broken. The same characteristics appear in the best of the contemporary writers; and Sir William Temple is not inferior to Dryden.

On the one, as on the other, French prose has exercised an undeniable action. The many translations of French works, the care with which Dryden and Temple have read French critics, their knowledge of the French language, enable one to discern the occasions and channels through which this influence did exert itself. But it seems possible to affirm that it was not the sufficing and decisive cause of a progress which the very quality of an age of Reason irresistibly demanded. A time when science passes into the foreground, when religion grows entirely rational, when the easily intelligible intercourse of minds in social life becomes the aim and law of literature, could not but tend to be an epoch of facile and regulated verbal communication; it was to aim at fashioning a prose both balanced and clear. The Restoration has not been exclusively prosaic; it has its brilliance, a kind of radiating glow, in which there still plays a last glimmer of the Renaissance; but if one considers the future, it is in the domain of prose that this period has realised its most lasting creation.

To be consulted: *Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. vii. chap. ix. xii. xv.; vol. viii. chap. i. x. xii. xv. xvi.; Gosse, *History of Eighteenth Century Literature*, 1889; Hutton, *The English Church from the Accession of Charles I. to the Death of Anne*, 1903; Overton, *Life in the English Church*, 1660–1717, 1885; de Rémusat, *Histoire de la Philosophie en Angleterre de Bacon à Locke*, 1875; Nichol Smith, *Characters from the Histories and Memoirs of the Seventeenth Century*, 1918; Walker, *The English Essay, etc.*, 1915.

CHAPTER VI

THE DISSIDENT WRITERS

1. The Elements of Psychological Dissidence; Idealism.—The literary tone of the Restoration is of a uniformity rare in the modern history of England. Paramount social forces, the coincidence of the inner rhythm and of circumstances, restrained the literature of this epoch to the relative sovereignty of a unique characteristic. Such simplicity, which in itself would not be a sign of wealth, is here nothing less than absolute. The collective life of a national spirit is never subjected to a perfect convergence. Already, in order to fit in this period to a logical frame, one must exclude the last works of Milton, which stand out like a glorious contradiction in the very centre of a hostile age.

This real complexity of temperament is not only to be found in the great belated Puritans. As soon as the facts are closely examined, almost all the writers and their works reveal, by the side of their dominant tendencies, other tendencies of a secondary nature; divergences of thought, of sensibility, and of taste, dissonant qualities as it were, which refuse to be harmonised with the moral tone of the period.

These elements of irreducible variety are, now, feeble but permanent features; now, momentary revivings, sudden accidental reappearances, and in this case their character has often a brilliant intensity. The preceding chapters have shown a fairly considerable number of moral or artistic moods that jar with the general tonality of the epoch. Lyrical poetry and the drama, in particular, offer a rather strong proportion.

These reserves do not impair the definition of the period. It is not by virtue of what it retains of lyrical inspiration or of deep and moving appeal, that the figure of the Restoration is recognisable among the ages.

As there are exceptional moods scattered throughout the whole range of literature, so there are writers who in themselves are exceptions. Among the contemporaries of Dryden are to be found several authors who cannot be classed chronologically among the survivors of the preceding age, and yet through their moral nature live wholly in harmony with it. They raise to the status of art the natural expression of a fund of sentiment that dimly subsists in many souls, especially among the popular classes. Puritanism does not disappear with the advent of the Restoration. Relegated to the background, jeered at, and in its turn persecuted, the austerely mystic and personal religion seeks refuge in obscurity and silence. The social atmosphere of the time is hostile to it; it has hardly any followers left among the influential classes of the day; literature, which it lately wanted to rein in and lead, now casts opprobrium upon it; by the common will of writers and readers alike, the art of writing is denied it.

But a deep belief cannot remain silent for long; the spirit of the dissenting sects makes itself heard indirectly, under shelter of the obscurity which enfolds them; and its accents, when they attain intensity of character and beauty, seek to veil this intrepidity under the humble guise of pious treatises, allegories, memoirs, which an edifying intention alone would appear to have dictated.

Can Bunyan, Fox, Ellwood be regarded as late-comers? They could equally well be described as precursors. They form the connecting link between the past and the future. They reveal the persistence of a psychological temperament, the gradual awakening of which, during the following century, will open the way to a renovation in literature.

It is in the work of these three writers that one must perceive and study this temperament, at an epoch when a reaction towards intellectuality is sweeping irresistibly over the more cultured part of the nation. The more distinguished symptoms, so to say, that one can discover among churchmen and university people, are at once less pronounced and less representative. The "Platonicians" of Cambridge maintain a brilliant focus, but one that is decidedly local, of idealistic thought, the radiation of which scarcely penetrates beyond the circles of practised thinkers. Henry More,[1] and Cudworth,[2] at first Cartesians (see chap. v.), react against the philosophy of reason, whose trend towards scepticism is making them more and more apprehensive. Not only do they affirm the immortality of the soul, but they nourish a rich and poetic feeling of its activity and destiny, that links them up with Plotinus. Cudworth is still a theorist of spiritualism; More is a fervent idealist, almost a visionary. But these thinkers have only been given their true place in the eyes of a distant posterity; and their influence has never been wide. On the contrary, the popular and at first hidden action of Bunyan from an early hour reaches a widespread class of readers; in the eighteenth century it emerges, to rank among the most fruitful spiritual forces of English literature.

2. Bunyan.—Bunyan[3] is only some few years younger than Marvell. If his work has to be connected with the Restoration, which officially ignores it, it is because it belongs almost entirely to this period. Besides, it bears the marks of persecution; it is animated by a violent ardour which imprisonment, inward meditation, despair of the present, all drive to the future, to dreams and symbols, to the compensatory revenge of impassioned fancy.

No other writer has been shaped under such humble circumstances as Bunyan. He knew nothing of university culture; one can say that his mind was moulded by a single book, the Bible. The power of his imagination was nurtured by the Scriptures, which he realised and lived through by the intensity of his fervour. The moving force of his spiritual dramas springs directly from a conscience in which the destiny of the soul was continually working itself out. Bunyan only listened to his secret voices, and only related his own story. Proceeding thus from the most common and most accessible sources of religion, his literary genius does not require to be explained through reminiscences or secret borrowings.

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[1] Henry More, 1614–87, published in 1647, a philosophical poem, *The Song of the Soul;* under the Restoration appeared the *Grand Mystery of Godliness* (1660) and *Divine Dialogues* (1668), in which he tries his hand at an interpretation of the Revelations; etc.

[2] Ralph Cudworth, 1617–88, is chiefly remembered on account of *The True Intellectual System of the Universe,* 1678, where he reviews the various objections to orthodox belief, in a spirit of remarkable fairness.

[3] John Bunyan, born in 1628, in Bedfordshire, was the son of an artisan, received a very scant education, served in the Republican army; after certain moral crises in which he was tormented by the anguish of sin, he found comparative solace in the faith of a Baptist sect where he exercised the functions of preacher, and battled against the Quakers. On the Restoration he was imprisoned and refusing to submit, remained a prisoner for 12 years. Liberated in 1672, he became pastor of his little church, then after three years was again thrown into prison for six months, and while thus in captivity wrote the first part of *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1676). His last years were those of an active and ardent apostle and writer. He died on the eve of the Revolution (Aug., 1688). The first work in which is revealed the quality of his imagination is *Grace Abounding,* 1666. *The Pilgrim's Progress from this World to That which is to Come,* published in two parts (1678 and '84); *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman,* 1680; *The Holy War,* 1682, represent the heights of his literary endeavours, which were manifold. Ed. by J. Brown, Cambridge. See the biographies by Southey, 1830; Venables, 1888; studies by Froude: *Bunyan* (English Men of Letters), 1880; J. Brown: *Bunyan, His Life, Time and Works,* 1887; J. B. Wharey: *A Study of the Sources of Bunyan's Allegories, with Especial Reference to Deguileville's Pilgrimage of Man,* 1904.

Much labour has been expended in estimating his debt to his numerous predecessors. The central theme of *The Pilgrim's Progress* has nothing original in it; it is a symbol as old as imaginative piety; and in his development of the story Bunyan follows the very lines of earlier allegories, among which the best known is *The Pilgrimage of Man*, by Deguileville. Probably no one will ever know to what extent his invention has been stimulated or guided by these suggestions, which were already familiar to the popular mind. He himself presents his book as the fruit of inspiration; thus it appeared to him, and it is probably wisest to view it thus.

The work of Bunyan is, so to say, a lay Bible, stripped of all that is not, to a Puritan conscience, the direct teaching of salvation; and as this teaching, for a simple and naïve mind, can only take the concrete form of an experience, each of his great works gives the story of the supreme experience in which is summed up every soul's life, of the decisive choice that it must make between God and the Devil. In *Grace Abounding* we have the history of a conversion in its most immediate form, that of a personal confession. No autobiography has a keener psychological interest. Aided by the strength of his inner perception, and by a dramatic sense of the struggles which are usually obscured in the dim light of the subconscious self, Bunyan, relating his own experience, has described with incomparable force the stages which lead a man marked out for faith, from the conviction of sin, through despair, temptations, and fights, to final peace and blessedness. With a striking realism his imagination throws into relief the actors of this mystic tale, and here the gift of vision can no longer be distinguished from hallucination. A moving sincerity emanates from these pages, where the moral and organic base of individual religion in its exalted form is reached with sure and unsurpassed audacity.

In other parts of his work, Bunyan raises a degree higher this implicit generalisation, this application of his own life's destiny to others, which is the motive power of *Grace Abounding;* and so the story of a soul becomes properly allegorical. *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* teaches through example, and like tragedy, through a catastrophe. *The Pilgrim's Progress* shows the way to the Eternal City. Calmer in tone, less strained, capable at moments of a smile, the dramatisation of inner experience here attains a richer and higher value. In following the heroes of Bunyan through the many vicissitudes of their journey towards the dream of their hearts, one understands the attraction that lies in this symbolical and puerilely deep tale, and how it has held millions of readers to whom it has presented the very picture of their most essential existence, of their incomparably strongest fears and hopes. A naïve ingenuity invests with a tangible appearance, either concrete or personified, the snares of the flesh and those of the mind, the help received from above, the perils, the backslidings, the mortal anxieties which beset the soul in its quest after salvation. The austere doctrine of a jealous God, of a path strewn with pitfalls, of the scarcity of the chosen, is illustrated with the enthusiastic fullness of a faith that knows and that sees; and the sombre pathos of Puritan Christianity has here realised its powers with unequalled amplitude and clearness.

Allegories such as these are masterpieces; but one hesitates in pronouncing, when they are concerned, the words "art" or "genius," because their greatness and beauty are wholly impersonal. Supremely eloquent by virtue of his objectivity, Bunyan has been the faithful mouthpiece of the religious conscience of a people. The sublimity of his work is that which lies in the highest torments of a human life excruciated by the torturing uncertainty of its moral future; he has been able to convey, to actualise this sublimity, but one feels that it transcends his very being, his intelligence, his real intent. Never has the inspiration of a creator been at bottom more collective. And this creator must not be denied the merit of having allowed to pass within him, without breaking, adulterating or defiling it, the torrent of the emotions and images which were stirring up so many less conscious personalities in a more obscure way around him. But the poet and the seer, in Bunyan, are but the supreme power of a spiritual exaltation, with which the humblest forms of what may be termed Puritan literature are almost always illuminated and uplifted.

As a writer, Bunyan has a natural gift that is undeniable; he feels and perceives with the greatest keenness; he knows how to express what he perceives; he knows how to tell a tale, to link up the incidents in a drama; his style, racy and full of sap, has nevertheless ease, lucidity, order, a sense of construction quite unexpected in one of so little culture. But this keen force of perception is what comes to a believer from the stimulation of psychological life by faith; this skill in dramatic effect is the direct influence of the powerful hold which an obsessing vision has over the mind it sways; the qualities of this language are none other than those of the English Bible of 1611, which has been absorbed, as it were, and has become the spontaneous dialect of thought. Bunyan writes with the Bible, no doubt transposing it, and reducing it to a more familiar tone, but losing nothing of the range of its nobleness. And the sure movement of his prose is due to the firm, sober pattern, to the directness, the architecture of the sacred writings. Through the communion of faith, Bunyan has risen to an equal footing with the scholarly translators of the Scriptures.

3. Fox, Ellwood.—That there is also in this literary worth a rare felicity of temperament, cannot be denied as soon as one compares *The Pilgrim's Progress* with the works of other contemporary mystics. Among the sects who succeed in traversing the moral desert of the Restoration, often at the cost of cruel suffering, that of the Quakers is perhaps the most noteworthy. It comes into existence at the height of the Civil War, and gives English Puritanism its freest, boldest, and also most logical expression; it really bases belief on the contact alone of the Divine intuitively known. Not only is the authority of the Church thus ruined, but further, in a large measure, that of the Bible is weakened. Better than the pastors of to-day, or the ancient prophets, the "inner light" brings revelation to every soul. Entering into conflicts with orthodoxy and with the less extreme dissenters; threatened from within by the extravagances of the "Ranters," in whom the visionary zeal produces effects too much opposed to the outward signs of Grace; denounced, beaten, imprisoned, at times put to death, the Quakers survive, through that force of resistance which is often called into being by persecution; they colonise whole districts in America, and in England, after their stormy beginnings, found a kind of religious race apart, which has its own language, costume and laws.

The numerous writings in which these men defend themselves, tell their own story, and spread their faith, are of the most vivid interest to the historian of ideas and sentiments. On this account, literary history cannot neglect them. But the spark of beauty which often glows in these works fails to dissipate the darkness of confused thoughts and of an entangled style.

The writers themselves, however, dominate the works, and by the force, almost always by the strange gentleness also of their personalities, they preserve a living appeal to us. Of all this multiple production, the writings which still bear being read by others than specialists or devotees are those wherein we find revealed the moral figures of George Fox[1] and Thomas Ellwood.[2] With the latter, of middle-class birth and rather advanced culture, the enthusiasm is tempered by a simple humanity, and his story, which throws an intimate and familiar light upon the religious struggles of the Restoration, has the taking charm of a true sensibility, all mingled with a resolution not to be conquered. But neither Fox, nor even Ellwood, writes like Bunyan; their style, in comparison with his, shows the obvious traces of an inorganic syntax, of a language in transition, and in one word, the stamp of this time, above which Bunyan rises through the unique concentration of his visionary power.

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[1] George Fox, 1624–90, the founder of the sect, whose scholarship was little better than that of Bunyan, dictated a *Diary*, which Ellwood, his disciple, corrected and published in 1694. The early text was published by the Cambridge University Press, ed. by Penney, etc., 1911. See the study by R. Knight (*The Founder of Quakerism*, etc.), 1922; by Hodgkin, 1896; Jones, 1904; Stähelin, 1908.

[2] *The History of the Life of Thomas Ellwood, written by his own hand*, was published in 1714; ed. by Henry Morley, Universal Library, 1886.

To be consulted: Braithwaite, *The Beginnings of Quakerism,* 1912; *Cambridge History of English Literature,* vol. vii. chap. vii., vol. viii. chaps. iv. and xi.; Clark, *History of English Nonconformity,* vol. ii., 1913; Dowden, *Puritan and Anglican,* 1900; Inge, *Christian Mysticism,* 1899; Jones (R. M.), *Studies in Mystical Religion,* 1909; Tulloch, *English Puritanism and its Leaders,* 1861.

CHAPTER VII

THE TRANSITION

1. Limits and Features of the Period.—The reign of William III. (1688–1702) forms a transition in literature. The characteristics of the preceding period continue to be dominant, but in part tend to weaken. Along with these, some new traits appear. One feels that influences are at work, preparing deep changes. They but slightly modify the moral physiognomy of the Restoration, to begin with; they further the definitive advent of classicism, in its completed form. But beyond this immediate action, one already perceives the silent inner working of a force which will progressively overthrow the order of literary values.

The closing years of the Restoration were restless with a feeling of political instability. A hidden or open struggle was being waged between the principle of absolute authority in State and Church, and the idea of tolerance and constitutional liberty. The Revolution of 1688 puts an end to this crisis. It decrees that henceforth there shall be substituted for the will of one man that of the ruling classes, as incarnated in Parliament; and that the privilege of the Anglican worship will not extend to the legal interdiction of other cults. Behind this decree which shapes the course of English history for two centuries, there must be seen a shifting of the centre of social gravity. The upper middle class of business men and financiers forces its alliance upon the hereditary nobility; it obtains the division of power, and, as a new-comer, immediately makes its own preferences felt. Society after 1688 remains aristocratic; but the spirit of the middle classes begins to impregnate its tone and its manners.

This moral contagion does not spread in a day; it is opposed by the persistence of the former tone, which it limits or destroys. The fashionable and cultured world, from which the literary public is recruited, remains longer than the mass of the nation under the sway of the cynical habits of the preceding age. Artistic traditions will survive for some time the needs which called them into being. Hence the hesitant character of the "transition" that is now defining itself; as yet it is only a Restoration toned down, relaxed, in which one perceives the germs of a more complete transformation.

In the psychological order of things, which is probably the most profound and explicative, the tendencies of a rational phase are not abolished; but in certain directions intellectualism is being sobered, if in others it remains the same; and in part of its domain, modes of thought and feeling directly opposed to it are revealing themselves. The empiricism of Locke replaces the fearless logic of Hobbes; Congreve's comedies succeed those of Wycherley; mediocre but worthy poets begin to pen edifying lines. The moralising taste of the middle class is there, growing conscious of itself, not as yet daring, but preparing and waiting for its hour. The first appearance of the sentimental play dates from these very years, before the turning of the century; the attack of Collier on the immorality of the stage coincides with it. In vain does Vanbrugh try to revive the insolent laughter of a disrespectful generation, and Toland foreshadow the offensive of "deism" against orthodoxy. A certain free, bold air, brilliant and at the same time coarse, now vanishes from literature as from life; the careless, disreputable revel of the Restoration has come to an end.

2. Locke and Philosophical Empiricism.—In 1688, Locke[1] is fifty-six years old; but as yet he has scarcely published anything. The Revolution realises his hopes, and enables him to give full expression to his ideas. From every point of view, he must be looked upon as the representative of the age when constitutional liberty and tolerance take definite shape.

The system of Hobbes is an extreme, almost exceptional form of English thought; that of Locke is an average form of it, broadly founded upon the instincts and desires of practical men, who are prepared to find complexities in truth, and anxious to adapt themselves flexibly to what exists. It is a preliminary motive of prudence and wisdom that is at the source of his *Essay on Understanding;* before dogmatically solving thorny problems, and pitting doctrine against doctrine, we must assure ourselves as to what man is able to know; the critical attitude of mind here springs from an experimental good sense. It is a genuinely English tendency, also, which shows itself in the negation of any innate idea, if not of any innate activity of consciousness. The world is built up of the work of reflection upon the simple data of perception; and all the adventurous and often verbal wranglings of a scholastic philosophy vanish before the cold, clear light of a notion of mental life which modern psychology has singularly outdistanced, but the realism of which at that epoch was fruitful. General concepts originate in the operation of thought on the particular; and essential certitudes are founded: our "ego," by a direct intuitional feeling; the existence of God, by a rational demonstration; that of nature, by the repeated perception of its sensible characteristics.

In this, no doubt, we have only a relativist theory of knowledge; if geometry, that ideal science, which is a product of the mind itself, retains all its solidity, the science of nature is no longer anything else than a probable linking-up of empirical observations. Such a conclusion was a discomfort to traditional philosophy, and almost an avowal of impotence. But Locke is not in the least perturbed by it. The probability of natural sequences is sufficient for our intellectual desires, since it suffices for our needs; the normal use of our faculties is to employ them for the preservation and conduct of our lives. If knowledge is necessary, it is with a view to action.

The rest of Locke's doctrine is a series of practical applications of empiricism. His political theory, like that of Hobbes, admits a primitive state of nature and a social contract; but instead of simplifying these notions and developing their logical consequences to the farthest possible limit, Locke turns to the observation of facts—contemporary facts—and here he discovers another "nature." Individuals are born free; they are subject to one law, that of moral behaviour. As this law is not always respected, the citizens of the same state delegate the judicial powers to certain representatives; this delegation, limited and revocable, implies reciprocal obligations; and government is but a public service. The spirit of the English Constitution could not be more accurately defined. As for property, it is founded, at least originally, upon labour. The economic theory of Locke is liberal, and sees the sources of English prosperity in commerce.

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[1] John Locke, born in 1632, in Somersetshire, studied at Oxford, and was attached to Christ Church in 1659; he interested himself in science (elected a member of the Royal Society in 1668), and in medicine, which he practised occasionally. Political agent, medical adviser, and confidential counsellor to Shaftesbury, he took part in public affairs from 1660 to 1675. Then he travelled in France, sojourned at Montpellier. On his return to England he was compromised in the disgrace of Shaftesbury and followed his master's example by seeking refuge in Holland, where he waited for the Revolution. William III made him Commissioner of Commerce and of the Colonies. From 1691 until his death in 1704, he resided with Sir Francis Masham, whose wife was the daughter of Cudworth, the philosopher. The three *Letters on Toleration* appeared, the first in Latin, the others in English, from 1689 to 1692. He published in succession: *Two Treatises of Government*, 1690; *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 1690; *Some Considerations of the Consequences of the Lowering of Interest*, 1691; *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, 1693; *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, 1695; he left several posthumous works, among which an examination of the theory of Malebranche on vision in God, and *The Conduct of the Understanding*. His writings on moral and religious philosophy aroused lively contention, to which he replied (*Controversy with Stillingfleet*, 1696–99, etc.). *Philosophical Works*, ed. by St. John, 1854; *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. by Fraser, 1894; *Thoughts Concerning Education*, ed. by Quick, 1880. See T. Fowler, *Locke* (English Men of Letters), 1880; Ch. Bastide, *J. Locke, ses théories politiques et leur influence en Angleterre*, 1907; studies by Fraser, 1890; Alexander, 1906; Hefelbower (*Relation of John Locke to English Deism*), 1919; S. T. Lamprecht (*Moral and Political Philosophy of John Locke*), 1921.

In theology, there is the same tranquil respect shown to facts—to these facts, the Scriptures and the moral needs of conscience. Questioned by a reasoning mind, which wants to find rules and motives of action, the Bible teaches a quite reasonable Christianity. In this atmosphere of lucid, calm belief, how could tolerance not be born? Experience shows us the varied nature of sects; religion is a purely personal matter; a church is a free grouping of believers; let all the churches therefore be given their liberty, with one reserve, the security of the State. The law will only intervene to ensure the observance of the social pact. The Roman Catholic and the atheist, according to Locke, thus find themselves, through their own fault, debarred from tolerance. . . . Finally, his pedagogy emphasises the practical virtues of education, as a formative agent of character; prefers the tuition of life to that of the Universities; protests against the traditional exercises of the schools; and finds the best instrument of culture in the child's maternal language.

We have here no longer the intoxication of reason, the biting criticism of a Butler, or the ardent logic of a Hobbes; but a rationalism incorporated with the temperament itself, sobered, and interwoven with the exigencies of life. It is the properly English form of rationalism; and one feels that by virtue of its calm easy adaptability, it has no longer any of that fixity of principle, of that impassioned single-mindedness in the search for a systematic theory of the world, without both of which, in fact, there can be no pure rationalism. What Locke establishes is the original tradition of English philosophical empiricism; much more plainly than Bacon, he expresses the intellectual requirements of a people for whom the success of knowledge is the proof and substance itself of truth. It is not only among the utilitarians but among the pragmatists of to-day that one must look for the direct posterity of Locke.

A thinker of this temperament does not bring any art into the expression of his thought. The *Essay on Understanding* is of a somewhat monotonous simplicity; in other parts of his work, the style does not lack animation nor even vigour; but on the whole, Locke is not a writer. However, he has definitively brought within the reach of the educated public problems which had till then been inaccessible. As others with morality, he has popularised psychology, and some aspects, at least, of metaphysics.

3. Halifax and Opportunism.—The same wisdom, practical, concrete, and so remarkably modern, constitutes the originality of Halifax[1] among the moralists and political writers.

An aristocrat, statesman, and man of the world, he possesses a wide and penetrating experience of life; he interprets it in a style of compact brevity, rich in implicit meaning, which recalls La Rochefoucauld and La Bruyère. But instead of a strained, brilliant style, whose aim is effect, we find in his work more simplicity, a veiled irony, a calmer and more frank acceptance of the hundred and one petty human mediocrities. His moral pessimism, as cruel at bottom as that of Swift, is all contained and palliated by the tolerance of resignation. His attitude is that of a man who wants to live and let live, without illusions, but without bitterness; and who instinctively seeks all that protects, sweetens, and safeguards the frail life of the individual or of the State—tranquil affections, reciprocal indulgence, a wise mean in everything, the respect of order. This philosophy is not the most noble, nor is it the most fruitful; but it is indeed the most natural to the social genius of the English people; and Halifax is a writer of a high representative value. His thought is too fine, his language too reserved, to permit of his being really popular; but his *Advice to a Daughter* was read throughout the eighteenth century; his *Character of a Trimmer* defined for the general public the doctrine of compromise upon which the Revolution of 1688 was about to take its stand. Reasonable, but not dry, bold without cynicism, he judges the problems of religion, like those of private conduct or of government, in a spirit of supple realism which is decidedly the special character of the closing years of the century.

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[1] George Savile, born in 1633, in Yorkshire, entered Parliament on the Restoration, served the Royal cause against Shaftesbury, and was created Viscount Halifax; he afforded the example and outlined the theory of political opportunism during the crises which succeeded one another from 1680 to 1688. He took part in the first ministry of William III., and died in retirement in 1695. An orator of great talent, he left behind several short pamphlets, full of common sense (*Character of a Trimmer*, 1685, circulated in manuscript, and published in 1688; *A Letter to a Dissenter*, 1687; *Advice to a Daughter*, 1688; *Character of King Charles the Second, etc.*), published either without the author's name or posthumously. These were collected in a volume of *Miscellanies*; ed. by Walter Raleigh, Oxford, 1912. See the study by Foxcroft, 1898; and by Gooch, *Political Thought in England from Bacon to Halifax*, 1914.

4. Comedy: Congreve, Vanbrugh, Farquhar; Collier's Criticism.—This character Restoration comedy could easily make its own; had it not established itself deliberately in the plane of realism? But the atmosphere has changed; and the brilliant talents which reveal themselves in the theatre after 1688 no longer ring with quite the same note as those of Wycherley and Shadwell.

The difference is at times slight; it is not, either, equally perceptible everywhere. Generally speaking, the plays of Congreve, Vanbrugh and Farquhar show the persistence of a literary tone, by the force alone of an acquired habit, while the social realities that justified it have begun to change. These plays none the less, and in the strictest sense, belong to their time. Each author expresses in his own way the spirit of the transitional period.

In the case of Congreve,[1] the connection is rather subtle to establish. His refined fancy starts with realism, outgrows it, and gives itself full scope in a domain of pure intellectual imagination. Irony, wit, an insolent verve, are all elements with which the Restoration had been familiar. But here they are combined, harmonised, through the virtue of a superior temperament of a writer and artist; the product of their fusion has a purity of matter, a delicacy of form, unknown to the Restoration. One feels that elegant raillery has now been bred in; that a new generation has risen which has this inborn gift, and carries it to perfection by means of conscious culture. One also feels that certain themes are worn out, and that comedy, from the pure and simple satire of manners, can now rise to their satirical idealisation.

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[1] William Congreve, born in 1670, near Leeds, came of an old-established family; prided himself on being at all times a man of the world and not a writer by profession; passed a part of his youth in Ireland, studied law in London, and at the age of 23 obtained a very great success with his first comedy, *The Old Bachelor* (1693). The plays which followed (*The Double Dealer*, 1693; *Love for Love*, 1695) added to his reputation; a tragedy (*The Mourning Bride*, 1697) did not lessen his fame. In 1700 his comedy *The Way of the World* was received coldly, and Congreve, at thirty, abandoned the theatre. Henceforth, he only indulged his talent in verse, and until his death in 1729, led a full and happy life, surrounded by his friends and enjoying a government pension. *Dramatic Works*, ed. by A. C. Ewald (Mermaid Series); ed. by G. Street (Henley's English Classics), 1895; *Complete Works*, 4 vols., ed. by M. Summers, 1923. *Incognita*, a short novel written in the youth of Congreve, was republished by Brett-Smith, 1923. See Ed. Gosse, *William Congreve*, 1888, new edition, 1924; G. Meredith, *An Essay on Comedy, etc.*, 1897; study by D. Protopopesco (*W. C., sa vie, son œuvre*), 1925.

However interesting the first plays of Congreve may be, they form, each with its special traits, an artistic progression, leading up to one, the failure of which abruptly checked the career of a fastidious writer, but which is the masterpiece of his style, and of modern English comedy: *The Way of the World.* Here one must look, in a brief study such as this, for the features of an original art, of which only Etherege had given a sketch worthy to be compared with it.

A plot carefully contrived, but not too obviously artificial; contrasted effects, a repressed vigour which bursts out in certain realistic traits; moments of comic liveliness, and farcical scenes: such are the elements of variety which save the play from too constant a distinction, from too dry a preciosity. In this solid framework, which offers nothing exceptional, psychological raillery and dialogue give themselves scope with incomparable brilliance. Congreve's heroes are animated by a greatness which is above circumstance, which seems to be its own end, to raise life higher than itself, and to carry the painting of character on to the plane of a poetic and charming creation. There is here, with a personal touch, with an accent of cynical impertinence in which one catches the ring of the epoch, a rapture of imagination recalling the early comedies of Shakespeare; at the same time idealised and strikingly true to life, Millamant and Mirabell are the decisive types of a passion which, welling up from the heart, intoxicates the brain with its light vapours, and excites the intellect without depriving it of its self-command. The exact and restrained skill of a master tones down the radiance of these figures, who come very near to the realm of romantic fancy, without actually entering it. At times the sparkle of the dialogue reminds one not only of Shakespeare, but of Marivaux, when in its finesse it sets about analysing sentiment; still, it is of a less highly quintessential turn than that of the French writer, and less uniformly busied with shades of meaning; it revels rather in impertinent sallies and witty diversions, aided by a wonderful gift for repartee and neat phrasing.

However intellectual, in fact, it may be at its source, the art of Congreve would not show its full power, were it not for the exceptional felicity of a language in which, to tell the truth, nothing is left to chance. Behind that elegant exactness, that perfect propriety, that easy tone, that balanced and firm rhythm, very scrupulous care is bestowed upon details. No English writer has better possessed the natural art of making witty people speak, of lending to the most idle of their remarks the piquant touch of the unexpected; but here nature is enhanced by the most artistic desire to give each word its proper value, by the sense of its connection with its fellows, and of the general harmony in which it plays its part. Congreve's prose is the finest and the most brilliant of the age of classicism.

Capable of imbuing characters with life, a master of dialogue and style, has Congreve added to our knowledge of man? In this perhaps lies the weak point of an author who by virtue of several merits is equal to the greatest. But if the nonchalance of his temperament, and the lightness of his art, do not allow his comedy to penetrate very deeply into the study of the human heart, it probes very far below the surface. Without having the value of revelations, the analyses he gives us of the feminine soul, and of a certain conscious and seductive coquetry, are of a very precious quality. And from all his art there emanates, like a discreet suggestion, a softened and almost indulgent pessimism. With much less brutality, Congreve is more of the true cynic than Wycherley; in his more sober tints is depicted a deeper vice, which sinks to the very conscience, and snaps the spring of all moral indignation. The only virtue which is held up to us—and it is perhaps in itself a sufficient antidote—is sincerity.

Shocked by this indifference to orthodox rules, the taste of posterity has been somewhat severe on Congreve; and Lamb, in order to save him from the common jurisdiction, has had to plead that his fancy is innocuous, because it creates in the realm of unreality.

The contemporaries of Congreve had not the intuition of this paradox, which conceals a truth. In his last play, he had to struggle against a revolt of the demands of morality—a reaction which in their entire careers Vanbrugh and Farquhar had to reckon with.

Ten years after the Revolution, a cleric, Jeremy Collier,[1] published an indictment against the "profaneness and immorality of the English stage." Already the uneasiness of middle-class feeling, at the cynicism in literature, had allowed itself to be felt in various ways. But here the attack was direct, full, and authorised; the Church was rising in arms against the theatre, to defend not only morality, but further, and especially, religion and the clergy, which comedy had often placed in a compromising light. The work of Collier has nothing of the nature of a popular argument, simple and naïve; it is a regular denunciation, scholarly and pedantic, and based—only Aristophanes being excepted—on the example of the Ancients, as on that of the French. Shakespeare, Dryden, Wycherley, d'Urfey, and most often Congreve and Vanbrugh, are taken to task. The sermon has weight, and Collier knows how to marshal his arguments; the intentional vehemence of his language avoids, generally speaking, the faults with which he reproaches his adversaries; but it is a sermon, and reveals a singular æsthetic incomprehension. The fundamental identity of art and morality is affirmed with a dogmatism that suppresses all problems, by forcing upon art very explicit moral ends. The reasons for the favour with which the painting of vice could have been received among a large part of the public, are not sought out. The deep link which connects this diatribe, justified in many respects, but superficial and summary, with the feeling which the middle classes have of their growing influence, is seen in the satirical remarks which Collier passes upon the "fine gentleman"; in his defence of the "rich citizens" against the gibes of the writers of comedy. . . .

The lists were now open. The authors involved did not refuse the challenge. They defended themselves by direct replies, and allusions in their prologues, epilogues and prefaces; Dryden, alone, confessed his faults, without, however, renouncing his principles. The history of this controversy cannot be summed up here. Its immediate influence has been, upon the whole, exaggerated. The tone of the English theatre shows no very appreciable change after the pamphlet of Collier; it will alter by degrees, and not by a unanimous movement, but along several lines; and the liberty of the stage will reassert itself more than once. But apart from the immediate object in view, and when studied in the light of the evolution of manners, these pages assume an historical value. They encouraged the rallying of ordinary opinion to the necessity of a reform; they were the centre of a veritable crusade against licentiousness both in literature and in life, which did not produce very deep effects, but reassured alarmed consciences, repressed some outstanding excesses, and created the atmosphere of moral order and balance indispensable to the advent of classicism. The transition here studied owes to it one of its characteristics.

The first play of Vanburgh[2] had done much to call forth the ire of Collier.

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[1] 1650–1726. *A Short View of the Profaneness and Immorality of the English Stage*, 1698. See study by Ballein, 1910.

[2] Sir John Vanbrugh, born in 1664, came of a Flemish family, established for two generations in England. Very little is known of his youth save that he was imprisoned in the Bastille in 1691. His plays, *The Relapse, or Virtue in Danger* (end of 1696), and

With *The Relapse*, in fact, freedom of verve and boldness of situation reach their limit. Here realism is again given full play, with a somewhat heavy touch, that tempts one to liken it to the brushwork of the Flemish masters; and one might also say that, setting aside the example of Congreve, it is to Wycherley that comedy returns, if the tone of the play were not so different from that of *The Plain Dealer*. In place of a harsh, bitter vigour, we have here a force of invention and Rabelaisian humour which spreads itself out, lively, huge, rollicking, sweeping off all the reserves of the spectator in an irresistible mirth. At bottom, there is behind this verve a pessimism of intelligence, a moral sincerity, a sanity of taste; and the work would not be properly understood, if one did not see in it at once a satire upon the new ideal of sentimentalism, already outlined by Cibber,[1] and the trace of the hold that this ideal was exercising even over rebellious temperaments, for some touches are introduced in *The Relapse* with a view to sentimental effect. This, however, is only a secondary aspect; Vanbrugh, above all, reveals his wit, his humour, his joy of a builder who constructs a play of solid workmanship, and who in it—one hardly knows how—joins two plots in one. This vigour, which tends to mere brutality, develops frankly into such in *The Provoked Wife*, and singularly contradicts the edifying intentions which the author proclaims at times—perhaps under the influence of Collier, with whom he was even then bandying argument.

Viewed as a whole, Vanbrugh's comedies are above all valuable as studies in manners; not that they do not enlarge upon the real, according to a system of voluntary exaggeration; but because they give us the deformation of the truth which the public accepted, and thus enlighten us as to the taste and special bents of that public; while permitting us, when they are reviewed with other works, to form a probable opinion as to what the truth really was. A Sir Tunbelly Clumsey, a Sir John Brute, a Miss Hoyden, are caricatures as much as types; but their interest is not less in one capacity than in the other.

It is permissible to find in Farquhar,[2] despite his merits, a somewhat tame copy of the fine audacity of his predecessors. He also was born with the temperament of a writer of comedy, gifted with facility and talent; but he came under the full influence of the wave of sentimentalism, which seems to have shaken the inner conviction of his art. His first plays are very licentious; and to the end, they show a natural indelicacy, in keeping with the tone of the age. But although he thinks himself obliged, from time to time, to show fight against the attacks of Collier, one feels that at bottom he approves the enemy's cause, and often he himself takes no trouble to disguise the fact. His Irish nature led him to mingle laughter and tears; but it would appear that the desire, perhaps unconscious, to flatter the tastes of the middle-class public, who were more and more asserting their own preferences, explains the deviation of his art towards sentimentality.

The Provoked Wife (1697), were performed with great success. With the exception of a posthumous fragment (*A Journey to London*), the rest of his work is composed of imitations or translations (Boursault, Le Sage, Molière: *Squire Trelooby*, 1704; Dancourt: *The Confederacy*, 1705, etc.). His tastes, however, were in the province of architecture; he built several castles or important buildings, among which were the Haymarket Theatre and Blenheim, the sumptuous mansion offered to Marlborough. He died in 1726. *Dramatic Works*, ed. by A. E. H. Swain (Mermaid Series), 1896. See the study of Lovegrove (*Life, Work and Influence of Sir J. V.*), 1902.

[1] See below, Book II. chap. i.

[2] George Farquhar, born in Ireland (1677), studied in Dublin, tried the profession of actor and had his first comedy, *Love and a Bottle* (1698), successfully performed in London. Then followed *A Constant Couple*, 1699; *Sir Harry Wildair*, 1701; *The Twin Rivals*, 1703; *The Recruiting Officer*, 1706; *The Beaux' Stratagem*, 1707. His life had all the uncertainty and adventure attending a careless character; he died in poverty in 1707. *Dramatic Works*, ed. by W. Archer (Mermaid Series), 1908; select works, ed. by Strauss, 1915. See study by Schmid, 1904.

In order to do justice to Farquhar, one must not judge him from the same angle of vision as Congreve or Vanbrugh. The interest of his work lies in the expression of an attractive and sincere personality, despite the sacrifices which he chose to make to the fashion of the day; and it is also to be found in the varied nature of his inspiration, which has widened the field of the manners studied, bringing into it new aspects of society and life: the army, the highways and inns, the serious problems of the family, divorce, etc. A taste for nature and truth reveals itself there. He has, on the other hand, verve and wit, knows how to sketch a character, and build up a plot; but none of these qualities is outstanding. A likeable man and writer, he lacks vigour, and his best moments do not attain to decisive originality.

Tragedy, however, did not show a vitality equal to that in comedy. By the side of Dryden in his old age, the period 1688 to 1702 saw no new talent arise, except the mediocre one of Southerne.[1] The late revival of drama with Rowe is posterior by several years; and the middle-class spirit has not as yet followed up its invasion of comedy by reaching the field of tragic art.

5. Poetry: Walsh, Garth, Blackmore, etc.—The spirit of the transition is also represented in poetry, by a group of writers who share in certain common tendencies. None of them rises above an ordinary level of honourable talent; their merit lies more in their conscientiousness, than in their inspiration; and this very mediocrity is a sign of the times.

Lustre is shed on the last years of the seventeenth century by one eminent poet, Dryden; but he no longer belongs, properly speaking to this age. With Walsh, Pomfret, Garth, and Blackmore,[2] something exterior to poetry itself comes into the foreground. One must not try to discover too precise reasons in order to explain this interval between the generation of Dryden and that of Pope; chance, which did not bring Pope into the world some years earlier, is above all responsible. But in some measure, it can be explained by the atmosphere itself of a moment when the progress of technique and form, on the one hand, and the moralising preoccupations of the middle class, on the other, threaten to weigh down and damp the flight of poetic imagination.

So that there scarcely remains anything worthy of praise in these writers, save their intentions; the correct and polished regularity of the verse of Walsh; the soberness, the amiable good sense of Pomfret; the laboured imitation of the *Lutrin,* not without wit and skill, which Garth realised in his poem; and with Blackmore, a certain noble ambition, which is too frequently given over to edifying nonsense, and loses itself in arid deserts, but which shows itself capable upon occasion of vigour, of subtle and compact argumentation, of enthusiasm even, and eloquence. Neither the beauties of single passages, nor the occasional gleams of poetry, can redeem—despite the interest of these secondary figures, who show so well the passage from one epoch to another, and who recompense an attentive study—the essential mediocrity of authors who just apply methods and formulæ, or seek in the moral conscience alone the reasons for writing in verse.

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[1] Thomas Southerne, 1660–1746, already known by his comedies, enjoyed two great successes with his dramas, *The Fatal Marriage,* 1694, and *Oroonoko,* 1696, the latter a strange play, inspired by Mrs. Behn, not without a certain brilliance, and at times revealing a little of the fire of Lee.

[2] William Walsh, 1663–1708, the friend of Dryden and Pope, is in certain respects an intermediary between the two poets; his best known poems are *Jealousy* and *The Despairing Lover. Poems,* in Chalmers and Johnson, *English Poets,* vol. 8. John Pomfret, 1667–1702, published in 1700 *The Choice,* which won a great and lasting success. *Poems,* ibid., vol. viii. Sir Samuel Garth, 1661–1719, is remembered for his poem *The Dispensary,* 1699. *Poems,* ibid., vol. ix. Sir Richard Blackmore (1650?–1729), a medical practitioner, wrote an epic poem (*Prince Arthur,* 1695), a philosophical poem (*Creation,* 1712), a *Satire on Wit* (1700), an heroic poem (*Eliza,* 1705), etc.; essays in prose, a translation of the Psalms, etc.; was praised by Addison, ranked highly in middle-class opinion, but later fell into discredit. *Poems,* ibid., vol. x.

To be consulted: Ballein, *Jeremy Collier's Angriff auf die Englische Bühne*, 1910; Beljame, *Public et Hommes de Lettres, etc.*, 1897; *Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. viii. chaps. vi. xiv. xvi.; vol. ix. chaps. vi. and vii.; Charlanne, *Influence française, etc.*, 1906; Gosse, *From Shakespeare to Pope*, 1885; Macaulay, *History of England from the Accession of James II.*, 1849–61; G. Meredith, *An Essay on Comedy, etc.*, 1897; A. Nicoll, *History of Restoration Drama*, 1660–1700, 1923.

BOOK II

CLASSICISM (1702–1740)

CHAPTER I

THE AGE OF CLASSICISM

1. Moral Elements and Social Influences.—The "classical period," to take the term in its broadest sense, extends as far as the decisive advent of Romanticism. But in the century which intervenes between the death of Dryden (1700) and the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), several phases must be distinguished. The first is that during which the characteristics of the new literature reach, by unanimous consent, their strongest degree of concentration and vigour. The literary career of Pope forms the axis of this age. One might therefore consider it as roughly ending a few years before his death, that is to say about 1740. From 1702 until this date, there reigns the relative unity of a literary age. Its general traits originate in those of the Restoration, which they continue, accentuate, and also in reaction modify. In order to understand the general resemblance of these two ages, and the differences which separate them, it is necessary, here again, behind the literature itself, to grasp the movement of thought, in its connection with the social influences at work.

The names by which periods of literature designate themselves, or which they receive from the succeeding age, are not always those which a distant posterity would choose for them, with the help of the perspective of centuries. It is for the sake of convenience, and according to a tradition which dates back to the end of the eighteenth century, that we still term "classical" the generation of which Pope is the centre, and so to say the symbol; in other respects, this name scarcely seems to suit it; neither in inspiration, nor yet in form, does it come very near either to the literatures of antiquity, or to the French model, which in fact it very often sets before itself; both its ideal, and the methods followed to attain to it, diverge from "classicism" in the purely artistic meaning of the word. Moreover, if this epithet is to stand for an appreciation of value, and the sign of an intrinsic superiority, the times are no longer when the writers of the first decades of the eighteenth century enjoyed a pre-eminence of merit as compared with their predecessors or their successors.

But this title of "classical," to which they did not dare lay claim, would have soothed their most cherished wishes; it answered to their deepest desires; it well defines the nature of their doctrine, their effort and their faith. To use the term, therefore, is to remain faithful to their actual intent, and to the consciousness they had of themselves. By observing the harmonious set of rules which seem to preside over beauty, such as the noblest civilisations of the past had realised it, and French culture was imitating it with brilliant success, these writers wanted to endow England, and believed that they did do so, with a literature which was polished, rational and perfect, and which could only be created in a century of refined and supreme elegance. They lived up to their ideal of classicism in thought and in will; and so this name can justly remain attached to them.

To use it to-day, is at once to give it a new meaning. What to our minds justifies one in employing the word at all, is the artistic and literary motive present in the consciousness of the writers themselves. Now, such a motive derives from an inward preference, of which even those who experienced it have not had a clear idea. The true source and the real quality of English classicism are of psychological nature. Its ideal, its characteristics, its methods, all resolve themselves into a general searching after rationality. The pleasure of being able to understand, the easy sense of simple orderliness, a smooth balance in ideas as in forms, such is the end pursued in those days by the great majority of those who think and write.

This is equivalent to saying that the intellectual phase of the moral rhythm, the beginning of which had been definitely marked by the Restoration, is continued after this period. The transition from 1688 to 1702 introduced slight differences into its intimate quality, but without altering its nature. This phase of the rhythm is even amplified with the new century, attaining therein its full development, and that, despite the qualifications and the limits which social influences impose upon it in some respects. For a literature which is essentially rational is not the work of a generation; it can only come fully into its own, be securely established, after a process of inurement, through which the average instincts have been adapted to it, and every perceptible difficulty has been smoothed away. One may say that the age of Pope lives more fully, more spontaneously at the pitch of that dominant intellectuality, which during the preceding age was chiefly an irresistible impulse, a kind of contagious intoxication. The Restoration had turned Reason herself into a free, adventurous guide; classicism now makes her a clear and calm adviser. Set modes of thought have now been formed, habits acquired and fixed. This way a tendency has to consolidate by getting more deeply rooted, is a normal consequence, whenever its free play is not impeded, of the energy which first started it on its course; this phase of consolidation precedes the moment when the very success of a mood, and its too exclusive dominance, will prepare the exhaustion of its resources, and the awakening of an inverse need, which will give rise to a transition. Already at the end of the seventeenth century, such minds as those of Sir William Temple, Halifax and Locke showed the advanced maturing of the elements about to produce classicism.

Circumstances are very largely favourable to this development, and hardly thwart it. The Revolution of 1688 does not constitute a break with the past; it inaugurates an organic and regular progress. The upper middle-classes associate themselves with the nobility in the exercise of power; a more extensive section of the nation participates in political influence and directs culture. The great merchants and financiers who thus rise into social prominence are the wealthy descendants of the "citizens" of the Puritan Republic; they retain all the vigour of a class that is making headway; but on the other hand, their moral temperament is subdued by the effect of prosperity, and of coming into contact with circles where refinement is of longer standing; they have in them the feeling for social discipline, the respect for all consecrated dignities; with time, they will merge in the aristocracy; meanwhile, they accept from it its scale of literary values. They have no new demands to bring forward in æsthetic matters; on the contrary, the need for order and balance suits their instinct, which is rapidly becoming conservative. The classical ideal of art, elaborated under the Restoration in an atmosphere of aristocratic elegance, finds full realisation during the reigns of Queen Anne and George I. in a broadened society, whose members are growing more numerous and so diverse, but where the spirit of the literature is undergoing no essential change. The upper middle classes are converted to this ideal; at a later date, they will become its zealous supporters; they will even uphold it against the first onslaughts of Romanticism.

But they only adapt themselves to it by drawing it, as it were, to them. They have their deep-rooted needs, their specific tastes; realists, capable of utilitarian aridness, they however never abjure, as a body, the emotive powers, of which they feel the hold upon life; capable of yielding to the attraction of fashionable cynicism, bringing into political and social intercourse certain forms of corruption, of venality, which are perhaps more natural to them than to other classes, they have nevertheless ingrained in them the instinctive respect for moral laws; they require to live in a moralising atmosphere, if not in an atmosphere of unblemished purity, in order to be at peace with conscience, and feel secure from Divine retribution. A first softening of sentiment, a first and partial reform in manners, are as early as the end of the seventeenth century the psychic counter-assurances in which the middle classes reveal their own individuality, and which enable them to identify themselves with the intellectual order of classicism.

The crusade of Collier, the adversary of immorality in the theatre, has already been mentioned.[1] Other signs evidence an effort, very inadequate as yet but very significant, to check a licentiousness that had now become a menace; this effort is not wholly in vain; in certain domains of public life—if not on the stage—the proprieties are henceforth a little better observed. Thus begins a movement, which will be taken up in turn by the teaching of Steele and Addison. At the same time, sentiment reveals itself as an independent literary motive and source of pleasure in a group of comedies, then in the first dramas of middle-class inspiration. Here again, the action of *The Spectator* will have been announced and prepared. A breath of tenderness in the literary and social atmosphere, a relaxing in the characteristic tension and dryness where the witty verve of the Restoration throve and expanded, are already perceptible in the opening years of the reign of Anne. The influence itself of the middle classes is bound up with these moral changes by very close and definite connections, which a careful study of the time enables one to grasp.

Thus, English classicism is really based upon a tacit compromise, hardly conscious of its existence, with an adverse social principle, the opposition of which, indirect or concealed in the æsthetic order of things, is not immediately visible save in the psychological order, that is to say, in a domain where clear self-awareness has not as yet penetrated. The men who have had the best intuition of this compromise, Addison and Steele, have only themselves been very vaguely aware of it. In their way of thinking, as in that of the time, it appeared that the observance of moral standards and the correctness of pure modes of living are associated by a natural affinity with classical taste. In fact, the motive force behind the reform in manners was a religious preference, that is to say a rather emotional motive, and finally a mystic one; the rebirth of sentiment, which accompanies and sustains it, is a moral movement of the same character, and of the same direction. The one and the other contradict the pure intellectuality of a rule of life and art based entirely upon Reason. This secret duality introduces a germ of transformation and ruin into the innermost elements of classicism, at the very hour of its full flowering. The eighteenth century will be the history of the slow development of this germ; and to study this period will partly be to try to account for such slow growth.

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[1] See above, Book I, chap. vii, sect. 4.

2. Literary Forms.—In summing up the inner origins of classicism, it seems paradoxical to insist upon an aspect of psychological life that is foreign to this doctrine itself. The moralising effort, and the first awakening of sentiment, are not, from the literary point of view, an integral part of the principle of classicism. This develops and is worked out in an indifference—that wishes to be serene—to all that does not countenance the harmonious, regular order of forms, the lucidity and the exactness of inspirations. But there is something more and something else, in the success of a school, than the maxims it invokes, or the ends it pursues in full consciousness. Classicism reassured the vital instinct of the middle classes who were in positions of control, because it stood for a hierarchy, an equilibrium; these classes, in turn, were reassured in accepting it, because at the same time it succeeded in introducing a provisional and superficial, but more becoming decency and fitness, into the life and feelings of society. The sobered atmosphere of the time of Queen Anne, with its partial and as yet timid resumption of middle-class culture and emotional life, enabled classicism to develop freely, and also permitted the bold negative spirit in thought or in manners to go just as far through other domains as in the reckless days of the Restoration. It is in this sense that the work itself of Steele and Addison is at the very centre of the final advent of classicism; with them, a rational artistic impulse, and the desire for a benevolent, slightly sentimental correctness in behaviour, approach so closely to each other as to enter into intimate contact.

The association of these two elements is in other ways made easier by the existence of intermediary shades. Classicism in England hardly ever shows itself in a state of absolute purity. Neither from the æsthetic, nor from the psychological point of view, can it be said that the literature of the age of Pope is the exclusive product of a single effort and of a simple quality. The authors have temperaments, in which very often an irrepressible instinct gives rise to the personal, lively, emotive impulses which are condemned by the theory of a rational art; and in their subconsciousness there is still the dim memory of all the former ardour of Elizabethan genius. Sensibility, imagination, a lyricism which the repressive action of culture cannot always reduce to correct limits, show through in a word, an image, a movement, an accent, with all the writers of this age. The relatively less pure character of British classicism, as compared with the French, is made up of these numberless and often subtle discordances of mind, of taste, of instinct; of this deeper layer of national originality, which is reflected through, or at times appears on the surface. Despite the irresistible rhythm, the spontaneous attraction which carries the mass of a people to a kind of inner mode of living which they had not at first chosen, despite the sincerity of the classical effort in England, born of a native evolution, and not of foreign influences, it is certain that this effort ends in compromise; in a literature, the mixed character of which is only imperfectly disguised; and finally, in a sort of approximation, very remarkable it is true, to the quality of classicism.

Thus the phase of literary history to which this name has been given—a name which it can retain—is built up on conditions favourable to its full growth, and which, even in so far as they are not openly accessary, are actually so by a kind of hidden adaptation. But one must not overlook the men themselves in the study of circumstances. Certain temperaments, and certain individuals, come to the fore in time for the complete realisation of this age. Writers are found to illustrate these dominant tendencies brilliantly, and in diverse ways. Pope, and the group of poets who acknowledge or tolerate his superiority, are naturally the centre of a literature so attentive to the laws of form, that the cadenced and compact expression of an idea is more precious in their eyes than the idea itself.

Close to the poetry dominated by Reason and correctness, must be grouped the various expressions of critical thought, and, so to speak, of active rationalism; and as its activity is now almost universal, we have thus a gathering of many provinces: moral philosophy, criticism, satire, history, politics; and in this vast realm, Swift is king. Another group is constituted by the middle-class writers, with whom classicism shows itself slightly coloured by a moralising and secretly sentimental intention; and here, Steele and Addison are to be grouped with De Foe despite the differences of their literary temperaments. Lastly, one must survey at one glance all the dissident writers—such as clearly show the spirit of the future, and the beginnings of the literature of sentiment. Philosophy, religious thought, comedy, drama, and poetry, will all supply materials for this synthesis of the elements through which the age of classicism, when inwardly tested, reveals, just as did the Restoration, an inner dissonance.

The merely æsthetic plane in which the history of literature is usually placed tends to simplify overmuch our mental picture of successive epochs, by neglecting to excess the secret differences within each age. A study of these differences helps one the better to understand the hidden connection between periods, and the movement which makes them grow one from the other. In the light of this analysis, the works of writers glow with an inward transparency, which enables us to grasp the development of their forms, and the links which unite these with the corresponding creative inspirations.

The classical period, however diversified it may appear to us, however fraught with internal dissidence, is yet a relatively coherent and ordered phase. Artistic expressions in it are more uniform than inspirations. For while the first are connected with the second as effect is with cause, a rigorous causality is here out of the question. In so far as different moods are capable of submitting to identical or analogous laws of expression, the wholly relative moral unity of this age hardens into a more strongly marked artistic unity. This is a common feature of epochs in which art disciplines itself, and tends towards the fixity of a balanced quality. To study the methods by which this hardening is effected, and the reasons for it, is to study the growth and the influence of the properly classical ideal in literature. To study, in a broader sense, the elements out of which this unity is accomplished, those which accept to enter therein and those which refuse, is to study the classical age itself. From one point of view as from the other, if the detail and exceptions are eliminated, there is discernible the stamp of a truly dominant character.

To be consulted: Ashton, *Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne,* 1883; Barbeau, *Une Ville d'Eaux,* etc.; *La Société Elégante et Littéraire à Bath sous la Reine Anne,* etc., 1904; Beljame, *Le Public et les Hommes de Lettres, etc.,* 1897; Cazamian, *L'Evolution psychologique, etc.,* 1920; Dennis, *The Age of Pope,* 1906; John Dunton, *The Athenian Oracle,* extracts from the *Athenian Gazette,* 1691–97; ed. by Underhill (Scott Library), 1892; *Critical Essays of the Eighteenth Century,* 1700–25, ed. by W. H. Durham, 1915; Elton, *The Augustan Ages,* 1899; Gosse, *A History of Eighteenth Century Literature,* 1889; Paul, *Queen Anne,* 1912; Saintsbury, *The Peace of the Augustans,* 1916; Leslie Stephen, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century,* 3rd edn., 1902; idem, *English Literature and Society in the Eighteenth Century,* 1904; Stanhope, *History of England* (1701–13), 1870.

CHAPTER II

THE CLASSICAL SCHOOL OF POETRY

1. **The Sovereignty of Form.**—To study the history of literature from the inner point of view is to try to reach the last accessible source of invention and expression itself. The price paid for this advantage is that an analysis thus carried out is not laid within the plane of what is, after all, the constitutive fact of a work of art: its form. No doubt, form is bound up with inspiration by links no less close than supple, which allow it a relative freedom, but which permit us, when once the artist has created, to inquire why he has expressed himself in such or such a manner. Nevertheless, to aim above all at a classification of writers and their works based on the quality of the impulse which animates them, is only to give a derivative value, as a principle of study, to the art in which this impulse is clothed.

Such a method would risk neglecting too much the interest, often sovereign, of the form, were it not that it is compatible in fact with the most attentive study of expression. The one thing needful is for it not to be exclusive, but to admit in practice the necessary adjustments. The occasion for a compromise presents itself very naturally, when a school or an age in literature has chosen form as the principle of its identity, and has put its very self into it. In such a case, it is more useful to accept this preference; to view everything from the standpoint of form, to begin with it, and to work back, in the last instance, to the moral attitudes which have been the real source of it. For to do so is only to modify the order of the factors, and to choose a convenient method of explanation.

English classical poetry founded itself upon the scrupulous searching for a perfection, the elements of which almost all reside in the domain of expression. A certain quality, not of creative emotion, nor even of the ideas, but of the order which binds them together, of the language which expresses them, and of the verse which gives measure to this language: such are its main demands. It follows that the absence of emotion does not in principle destroy this poetry, and that the nature of its theme is left to its own free choice. Carried away by the dialectic movement which sways this age, poetry then is almost always busy with the exposition or criticism of theses. It almost wholly belongs to the class of polemical or argumentative writings. Now, such is also, indeed, the character, at this epoch, of most of the other branches of literature; and, therefore, one should only, from the strictly inward point of view, allot a very small space to the study of the poetry; this should be all, leaving out exceptions, examined at the same time as the prose. One single chapter—that which embraced the diverse aspects of "rationalism in being"—would absorb three-quarters of the classical age.

It is only in appearance that this would be a paradoxical result. But it is probably best, for practical convenience, to avoid it. Therefore we shall not attempt to separate all that is argumentation, analysis, satire or discussion in verse, from poetry; and the versified work of Pope, animated as it is and sustained from beginning to end by the spirit of demonstration, if one leaves aside the flashes of lyricism, will assuredly be part and parcel of this domain, preserving the formal unity assured it by the imperious claim of its prosodic style. With Pope, one must also link up the contemporary poets, the school over which he presides; and survey at one glance the mass of an abundant literature, the essential characteristic of which, according to a tradition here justified, will be that it is written in verse.

2. **Pope; Early Poems.**—The life of Pope is difficult to sum up.[1] To all appearances rather calm, it is nevertheless in a constant turmoil of vexation, inflicted upon it by a restless, nervous, unstable self-consciousness. Forced by his health to live in relative seclusion, he does not find repose even there, but is agitated by the clashing of rival political interests, in which he takes a side, without actually engaging therein; or by literary strife, which stimulates his verve and supplies the subject matter of his work; or lastly and chiefly by his personal quarrels, which most often envenom the other conflicts. From every point of view his life is intimately wrapped up in the history of his time. Despite its occasional meanness, the lapses in dignity, or even in conscience, which are traceable to a morbid vanity, this life is remarkable through the continuous effort it displays, the ever-scrupulous labour of the artist, the success of an ambition which Dryden had not fulfilled to the same degree. The legislator of Parnassus, just as Boileau, and the undisputed master of an art and of a school, he finds himself on an equal footing with the great. He it is who establishes in England the social prestige of the man of letters. Moreover, he is a shining example of what the care for perfection and style can be.

His career as an author is longer than one would be led to suppose from the actual duration of his life, for his adolescence is part of it, and not the least important. His first poems form a natural group; in them are to be found, together with a growing mastery of touch, a bunch of spontaneous qualities which are already, at this early stage, all they will ever be. It has even been possible to say that the *Pastorals* remain in a sense the masterpiece of Pope. These little imitations of Vergil, adapted to modern life and English soil with very dexterous skill, are the fruits of a conscious inspiration, slightly artificial, stimulated by literary memories, and teeming with reminiscences; but they also evidence a precocious talent, the sincerity of which is here indistinguishable from artifice. These lines of admirably easy flow, helped on by an already expert cleverness, which introduces charming arabesque work into their regular pattern, are genuine outpourings in a way; never was the language of poetry more liquid, nor its measure more even and smooth.

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[1] Alexander Pope, born in London (May, 1688) of middle-class parents—his father was a linen-draper—and Roman Catholics, remained faithful to this creed, which entailed in addition to special taxes, his exclusion from the Universities. Puny and of delicate health, he read ancient and modern writers, giving himself a classical education which, if not solid, was certainly wide. The years of his precocious youth, when he was already the very attentive and polished writer, were spent at Binfield near Windsor. The *Pastorals* (1709), the *Essay on Criticism* (1711), *The Rape of the Lock* (1712, revised 1714), *Windsor Forest* (1713), form the group of early poems, with occasional pieces, all of which were collected in a first edition of his *Works* in 1717. Recognized as the most brilliant among the new poets, he devoted ten years of labour to a translation into verse of Homer (*Iliad*, 1715–20; *Odyssey*, 1725–26), which brought him a competence; he took up residence at Twickenham, in a villa which he adorned with gardens and artificial rocks, and where he received his friends, among whom some very important personages (Bolingbroke, etc.). His enemies did not occupy him less during his lifetime; they drew from his pen the *Dunciad* (in its first form, 1728; revised in 1729, and especially in 1743); numerous allusions to individuals give an edge to the *Epistles and Satires* (imitations, for the most part, or adaptations from Horace), forming with the *Essay on Man* (1733–4) an ensemble, which, at a later date, was collected together by Warburton. Pope, also, edited Shakespeare (1725) and published his own correspondence which is, in part, faked (1735, etc.). He died in 1744. *Works*, ed. by Elwin, Whitwell and Courthope, 1871–89; *Poetical Works*, ed. by Ward, 1869; *Rape of the Lock*, ed. by Parrott, 1906; *Essay on Criticism*, ed. by Ryland, 1900; *Essay on Man*, ed. by Pattison, 1872; *Satires and Epistles*, ed. by Pattison, 1874. See biography by Courthope (*Works*, vol. v.); the *Anecdotes* of Spence (edn. 1820); studies by L. Stephen (English Men of Letters), 1880; O. Elton, *The Augustan Ages*, 1899; Dennis, *Age of Pope*, 1906; Saintsbury (*History of English Prosody*, vol. ii., 1908). A Bibliography of Pope by R. H. Griffith is in course of publication (1923, etc.).

More ambitious, and with greater elements of interest, *Windsor Forest*, a poem of a not dissimilar kind, already betrays the decline ot an art, the absolute purity of which is only compatible with themes of narrow superficial character. Another poet appears here, who is the narrator, the reasoner, the maker of epigrams; even the description deviates towards something which lies outside its ken—political flattery, history, ethics, philosophy; and one feels, no doubt, that the nervous form will carry the condensed and brilliant idea without giving way; but the continuity of the inspiration breaks down, and the effort made by the thought reveals itself in some unevenness and intermittence of flow. Upon a nature that is personal, elegiac, irritable, without much depth, the rational spirit of the classical age will soon graft a didactic temperament. The work of Pope will gain from it in greater substance; the versifier will draw from it wonderful effects of brilliant argumentation; yet it is not certain if the poetry itself has not lost something in the process. *Windsor Forest* has still to offer a freshness of atmosphere, a feeling for nature that is confined to familiar horizons, but sincere within these restricted limits; and further, a language the conventional tendencies of which are as yet discreet enough to be tolerable.

The Rape of the Lock shows a further move in the same direction. As often happens at this epoch, the aspiration after a big subject, not being sustained by a strong creative mood, stops half-way at the compromise of a mock-heroic intention; the classical period is the golden age of parody. The rational attitude of the writer tends to make him critical, and of a modern turn of mind, while on the other hand, his doctrinal principles force upon him the imitation of ancient models, the gravity of an æsthetic cult; this forced respect, this obsession of the past, imply a constraint, and the spirit of the time finds a subterfuge in imitating antiquity in a vein of mockery. The abundance of the mock-heroic type of literature betrays an instinctive effort in the world of letters to reconcile a little independence with a dogmatic orthodoxy, and to introduce an element of novelty into an imitative art.

This is not to say that *The Rape of the Lock* is a parody in quite the same way as so many other contemporary works; the subject, however unimportant it may be, has an interest in itself; and the contrast of its delicacy with its serious tone and the traditional trappings in which it is set, brings out its somewhat quaint grace. Nevertheless, it is permissible to think that all this is very artificial. The ingenuity, the wit, an often striking verbal felicity; an occasional note of true imaginative poetry, in the pretty fancy of the sylphs; the skilful handling of the conclusion, so discreetly hinted; shafts of satire which, though light, yet penetrate—cannot make us forget that the laboured application of this art is here excessive; or efface prolix passages, traces of vulgarity, the musky atmosphere of a fashionable elegance, to the prestige of which the poet bows even when he claims to dominate it. The form reveals a greater proportion of periphrases and indirect expressions.

The *Essay on Criticism* is the crowning effort of these early poems. Here one feels that Pope has found his new manner. Since the inner movement of his temperament—accentuated, no doubt, by the influences of the time—carries him decidedly away from the lyrical mood, it is towards literary or moral criticism that a safe instinct inclines him. The search and expression of rules and laws, the intellectual activity which judges, values or legislates, which combines principles or distinguishes shades, such is the kind of poetry best adapted to the thought and creative impulse of the classicism of 1710. The germ of this work is in a theory of criticism, of its maxims and duties. Pope, no doubt, wants to be a creator, not less than a lawgiver; he reminds us that criticism was first of all the servant of the Muses; he upbraids the pedants who claim to be able to make a good poem out of recipes. But the hierarchy thus established is only on the surface; at bottom, the classical age believes that it can understand, and define in terms of reason, all the conditions of the beautiful. A well-taught and well-informed judge must therefore be infallible; his precepts will open up the way to perfection, without any possibility of error; in following his counsel, one will be insured against all risks. His high office is second to none; he is, in a sense, the supreme man of letters. And thus, from the problem of how to judge works, Pope by a natural gradation, quite smoothly, passes on to the production of the works themselves. The example of Horace and Quintilian, whom he is constantly imitating; of Boileau, whom he has constantly in mind, carries him away, without, indeed, any resistance on his part; and in the end it is an "Art of Poetry" that he gives us.

The doctrine herein formulated is not cast, as it were, at one stroke, or built up into a firm consistent whole; the thought of Pope, while sharp and clear, is never really synthetic; it is often fragmentary. In a very imperfect order, what is taught is still indeed the gospel of classicism. The starting point is the compulsory study, the imitation of nature. Thus, one can find in Pope something of the spirit of the "Moderns"; in a less precise manner than Dryden, he allows us to see that he makes his own this essential claim: the right to judge the Ancients themselves in the light of a superior principle; the necessity, for the most correct art, of accepting a free inventiveness, a force of originality which is the contribution of the literatures of the new world.

No doubt, following Boileau and Dryden, Pope identifies Nature with the example of the Ancients; the latter, in their discovery of rules, did not invent them; they formulated for all time the conditions of artistic work. And this is how they have come so close to perfection. To study them, to assimilate their practice, is to ensure oneself in the most effective way possible against error. But their example itself, and the true spirit of their doctrine, teach us at times the transgression of the rules they followed, in the interests of a more inward and spiritual observance. With Quintilian, Pope admits that there exist beauties which are above precepts; intuitions, we should say, which the artist cannot justify in abstract right; which appeal to the heart, without passing by way of the faculty of judgment. This breadth of thought, which proves that Pope has grasped the truest idea of ancient art, is again to be seen in the emphasis he lays upon the constructive and sound character of classicism; upon the preference of the whole to mere details; upon the need for a positive criticism, more attentive to qualities than to faults; it is also revealed in the relation he establishes between art and historical environment; each writer, according to him, ought to be judged from the point of view that was his own. Finally, his literary orthodoxy is steeped in a kind of humanity; a moral, almost sentimental element finds its way into it; the critic has a social mission to fulfil; he values not only books, but men, and manners; the enlightened, indulgent censor of literary works, he will not tolerate vice. The close connection between a triumphant classicism and a reform in morals, a first reassertion of the English character through discipline, would thus not fail to show itself in Pope, at the same time as in Addison.

These principles once laid down, the *Essay* very soon loses itself in details. Its general teaching, thus summed up, leaves the impression of something that is rather rich, rather supple. Beside the dogmatism, some elements of relativity appear in it; beside the pure rationalism are to be found the traces of a free and modern æsthetics of sentiment.—But if one inspects this doctrine more closely, and examines it in the light of Pope's practice, one recognises that its pliability is due above all to the assimilative faculty of a mind that is still more skilful than consistent. In laying diverse elements side by side, Pope has not been anxious really to combine, or to amalgamate them. He draws his sustenance from the common treasure of critical wisdom, profits by the examples of the Ancients and Moderns alike, and has the merit of welcoming their most fruitful suggestions, of entertaining a liberal and realistic notion of art that is more concerned with things than words, with qualities than with rules. In fact, the *Essay on Criticism,* in its central effort and purpose, is a lesson in literary conscientiousness, care, and correctness. Therein lies its interest, as soon as it quits the easy domain of generalities; there it is that the mass of its precepts really bear weight. Much more than invention, Pope in effect teaches, it is the form that counts. The ideal talent consists in renewing through expression thoughts that may be commonplace. It is in this sense that he himself has lived and realised his doctrine; in this sense also his contemporaries have understood and accepted it.

The gospel of classicism is, therefore, despite everything, broader and less dogmatically rational than will be its practice. It has better defined the sovereign liberty of art, than it has profited thereby. For it lived above all through the intellect; and artistic creation is not, in itself, of the intellectual order. ?

3. The Translation of Homer.—To translate the ancients is the narrowest application, but the most direct as well as the surest, of the doctrine of classicism. Dryden had set the example, and it had found many followers. Translations in verse abound in the time of Pope, as during the Restoration. Tonson, the publisher, whose relations with the writers form an important chapter in literary history, publishes in his *Miscellanies,* as early as 1709, an episode which Pope has translated from the *Iliad.* The great poet, already consecrated by success, is then implored on all sides to attempt a complete translation of the Homeric books; this would be to answer the need of public taste, and to establish his fame definitively. Pope accedes to the solicitations of his friends—Addison, Steele, Swift, Garth, and Congreve; Lintot, the rival of Tonson and Pope's usual publisher, makes him the most liberal offers. He is not at all specially prepared for the task; but he will direct his efforts by reference to former versions in English, Latin, and French. The burden of this long undertaking beneath which he often groans, is alleviated, in what concerns the *Odyssey,* by collaborators. So great is the prestige of the Ancients, that to his contemporaries Pope remains first and foremost the translator of Homer.

His achievement, in a way, is quite a feat. This version, which was read and admired throughout the whole of the eighteenth century, and even after, preserves to-day a remarkable firmness of texture; this it owes to the painstaking scrupulousness of a writer to whom art was synonymous with conscience. Pope had the gift of neat phrasing and a rare faculty of verbal condensation; he has built this artificial work in so dense a substance that time cannot easily impair it. He has polished it with a fairly just instinct of sobriety, has adorned it with an elegance which is far from Homeric, but which lends a distinguished touch to the whole. The expression, always carefully selected, possesses a forcefulness, a dignity, and even at times a certain power of evocation. Strains of poetry, an echo transposed into the tonality of this age, can also be heard in it.

But it suffices to let oneself be carried away by the movement of these rhymed couplets, to catch the deep dissonance which parts their music from the rhythm of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey.* Their cadence, regular, balanced, short, and monotonous, is an instrument of suggestion quite different from the long and flexible Greek hexameter. And over and above this metrical difference, is revealed the irreconcilable divergence of the inspirations. It is natural that Pope should understand Homer in the same way as did his contemporaries; all the effort of archæological reconstruction and of a more supple understanding which has since been expended upon the subject takes us farther and farther away from such an outlook. It seems to us that apart from the inevitable errors in meaning, a graver and more fundamental error bears on the very quality of the civilisation and moral life which Pope wishes to reproduce; the equivalents which he presents imply an ideal which is falsely refined, politely amorous, artificial, and one in which the naïvety of the original is replaced by a pompous majesty. The simple figure of the antique epic to the minds of this time was haloed with an august grandeur; and Pope is constantly keying up the thought, the feelings, and the words to what they ought to be. His diction, which teems with abstract turns, stereotyped epithets, and the elements of a vocabulary then in the process of hardening into a cold nobleness of expression, is mostly responsible for our impression of an absolute anachronism. Coleridge has said that the translation of Homer is to a large extent answerable for the formation of "poetic diction" in the eighteenth century.

4. Moral and Satirical Works.—Assuredly, while shaping his growth in the direction demanded by classicism, the feeling for which he strengthened more and more within himself, Pope developed his talent for satire and argument in verse; and it is in this province of literature that he has written his strongest works. Pure poetry was not the gainer for it; but the vigour of a temperament was thus displayed, and it produced its most characteristic fruits.

The ambition to be a philosopher grew upon Pope with the passing of time. The concise and brilliant form of his expression is better attuned to ideas, is more in harmony with moral reflection, critical judgment, and the writing of epigrams, than with any other theme. And no doubt the couplet, that small closed self-sufficient group of selected, compact words, hardly allows of a consecutive linking-up of thought, of long complex reasoning that is loaded with qualifications, of cumbersome periods garnished with clauses; the argument thus tends to resolve itself into an unlimited series of clearly defined and equal propositions; it ends and begins again at each step. It proceeds therefore by accumulation, rather than by true progression; once a result is attained, it passes to another thesis, most often without any transition. And within each couplet, the rhythm, the balancing, the relation of the two lines which answer each other, and of the two half lines, separated by pauses for the most part regular, suggest a simple equilibrium, made up of the opposition of two terms; antithesis is the general type of which the rhetoric of Pope has an infinite number of varieties to offer. All this can hardly be adapted to a truly systematic statement.

But there is really no question here of system. Pope borrows his moral ideas; combines them just as imperfectly as he did his literary ideas at an earlier stage; he simply reconciles them through the instinctive unity of his temperament. His attitude is that of a receptive eclecticism. His strongest philosophic dissertation, the *Essay on Man*, is composed of refreshed commonplaces, enlivened with contemporary influences, in which the optimism of Shaftesbury and the deism of Bolingbroke predominate. It takes the pious and somewhat sectarian zeal of his disciple Warburton to discover therein a connected notion of the universe and of life; or to draw up the general plan in which were to have been included, with this poem, the other *Moral Essays*, discontinuous fragments, written at very different times, mostly before Pope had any notion of a possible synthesis, and offering in no way the internal proof of a common intent.

There are none the less among them strikingly successful pieces. The didactic work of Pope is one of the triumphs of classicism. The *Essay on Man* comes very near to what true philosophical poetry can be, and at times attains to it. With a little more warmth of soul, a little more imaginative ardour, the parts of this uneven rhapsody might have been amalgamated into one single mass; as it stands, it has its inspired passages, and its vehement tone lifts up and joyfully carries the weight of the ideas.

Less strained, more familiar, brightened by a sly jocularity, by an irony which would like to be always well-intentioned, or at least master of itself, but which cannot succeed in concealing the bitterness of personal grievances, the *Epistles and Satires* are also remarkably successful examples of this special kind of poetry. Here it is that Pope is most at ease; his qualities fit him admirably for versified talk. Whether the form of the dialogue is adopted, or the poet is addressing a chosen friend, it is always in action that the mind which occupies the stage is shown; the thought has thus a liveliness of movement, a spontaneity, an animation, without which the moralising would run the risk of becoming heavy.

The first epistles, written shortly after 1730, have no other source, like the *Essay on Man,* than the philosophy of Bolingbroke; they develop commonplaces about the "use of riches," the "characters of men," and "of women." It is in 1733 that Bolingbroke advises his friend to enliven his satire by a modernised adaptation of Horace. This method has already been used in France by Boileau, and in England by Rochester, Oldham, and Swift; Pope discovers in it a fit instrument for his verve, and employs it with delightful effects. His ironic praise of George II., under the crushing name of "Augustus," is a masterpiece. The after-taste of parody so natural to classical art is here commingled with the intellectual pleasure which accrues from the continual sense of the relations, of the suggested and implicit analogies or differences between the present and the past. This constant and intentional semi-anachronism is not always handled with sufficient ease to be absolutely pleasing; but the suspicion of pedanticism which might emanate from it is effaced by the irresistible effulgence of a witty malice, which, however, is too often sharpened and envenomed by a keen desire for vengeance and retaliation. Underneath disguised names, or recognisable initials, Pope has left us the picture gallery of all his enmities and his hatreds. Many of these full-length portraits are immortal. It is generally agreed, however, that with him virtuous indignation is often fed or even replaced by the smarting of a raw and sore personality.

Recent research would tend to prove that Pope had sometimes to meet the initiatives of his adversaries. Still, his desire was to give himself the air of one persecuted; his attacks claim to be only of a defensive character. In fact, the story of the first *Dunciad* reveals the premeditated aggressiveness of a fiery mind, susceptible, quick to seize upon what is ridiculous and foolish, skilful in throwing it into relief, against authors at times really jealous or secretly malignant, but for the most part peacefully disposed. This, however, is a small matter; Pope has endeavoured to lend his work the apparent excuse of a provocation; it belongs however, assuredly, to the spontaneous warring of talent against mediocrity. The impulse which gave birth to the *Dunciad* should be looked for in the common fund of satiric banter which was kept up in the friendly relations between Swift, Arbuthnot, Pope, and Gay, and which produced the successive avatars of *Martinus Scriblerus,* the symbol of the pedanticism of the dull writer. The theme of the work is taken from the *MacFlecknoe* of Dryden; but Swift's influence is to be felt in a certain touch of stressed realism. It was revised on several occasions; the edition of 1743 added to it a fourth book, and substituted Colley Cibber for Theobald as "King of Dunces."

An ambitious, sustained effort of literary and moral satire, the *Dunciad* is inferior to the lighter productions in the same vein. The rather complicated symbolism, the fable, which aims at being thoroughly allegorical, are beyond the constructive faculty of Pope. The poem cannot conceal some constraint and frigidity; the moments of full power, the brilliant episodes, are interrupted by arid passages; the mock-heroic elements, more explicit and more laboured, often look like an unhappy afterthought. Whatever Pope may say, he attacks dead and living persons alike; and the oblivion which to-day surrounds most of their names gives one the impression that his thrusts are lost in space. There is in all this a little of the musty odour which at times emanates from the diversions of the scholar. It is a pity, also, that Pope did not hesitate to upbraid the poetasters for their shabby clothes as for their clumsy lines; and his attempt to pose as the champion of virtue as well as of wit is rather futile. The enormity of the postulate upon which all satires rest, the fragility of that dogmatism which judges and condemns, without ever distrusting itself, or the efficacy of the weapon it handles, awaken a growing uneasiness in the reader. It is the triumph of Pope's genius to have often dispelled this uneasiness, destroyed these reserves, through the sure vigour of an eloquent sense; and the fourth book, in which the theme develops into a criticism, with full grounds, of intellectual education under all its aspects, is of a manifold and substantial interest.

5. The Classicism of Pope.—The best passages in the *Essay on Man*, in the *Epistles and Satires,* and in the *Dunciad,* form the summit of Pope's art in the fullness of its maturity; they are also the summit of English classical poetry.

They owe this eminent merit to the union of a temperament with resolute labour. Pope is gifted for clear thinking, at least with regard to detail; his agile mind grasps the characteristic angles of things, the prominent features of their relief, those by which they resemble or above all oppose one another at first sight. Their intimate and essential quality, the subtle shades also which establish fine transitions between them, the complexities, in a word, and the depths, often escape him; but no one better possesses the definite and accurate mental images whence there springs of itself a striking relation of terms, that is to say, an idea. Rationality thus consists here, before all, of keen and luminous perceptions. On the other hand, the writer knows how to convey this easy, happy exercise of intelligence, how to render it by the most suitable, the briefest and most telling words; and thus the pleasure which the poetry of Pope procures us rises primarily from a joyous intellectual activity which moves among ideas, seizes them, combines them, arranges them into groups, with so much ease that it seems to soar of itself in the full bright light, above the incertitude and confusion of human thought.

The art of expression, very attentive and minute, aims at imparting and still further intensifying this sovereign ease. It succeeds in doing so chiefly through a cadence of the language, which is one with the rhythm of the verse. The heroic couplet is inseparably associated with the mastery of Pope. The effects he draws from it are less varied, of a less poetic quality than those of Dryden; but in a narrow scale they acquire an incomparable effectiveness. The alexandrine becomes very rare; the "triplet" is exceptional; the pauses tend to settle permanently round the centre of the line; the free circulation of ideas between the couplets is repressed by a mental preference, which has become habitual, almost automatic, and which finds satisfaction in short and balanced expressions. The rhyme marks and stresses the end of the line, to a much greater extent than it can be said to add an æsthetic element, a musical touch or an effect of echoing repetition; it is often poor, and at times worse than poor. Thrown out in succession by a concentrated force of energy, which lets itself go each time without ever giving itself away or spending itself, for it retains perfect self-control, these lines are just like glittering shafts; they have the elegance and cold gleam of polished steel.

The beauty, a beauty severe and still intellectual, is here the result of a perfect adaptation, in which the precision of the thought, the aptness of the terms, and the strong regularity of the rhythm, answer to each other, and blend in a nervous and brilliant eloquence.

6. Diverging Elements.—Does this poetry appeal only to Reason, to spite, to a sense of comedy, to moral judgment? Is the pleasure it awakens to be found wholly in clearness, justness and order? Or does it stir up sensations and emotions; does it allow for imagery, and does it move our feelings?

The elegiac poet in Pope died young; but he did not die all at once. His voice is still to be heard in the early years of maturity. And even when the classical rhythm of thought and of verse holds full possession of him, some transitory moments will remind us that beneath the writer there is the man, and that his temperament is not simple.

No writer did ever show a temperament of ideal simplicity. A pure classicism—in the sense of literary rationalism—would be an æsthetic impossibility, and would not any more be found in France. The diverging elements which we meet with in the work of Pope prove that the mixed character of his nature, less rich than that of Dryden, is still recognizable. A hereditary and distant background of sensibility seems to revive in it.

Several of the shorter poems are in this respect full of meaning. Not the rather frigid sublimity of *Messiah,* nor the *Ode for Saint Cecilia's Day,* an intellectual transposition of musical effects; nor the *Choruses for the Tragedy of Brutus,* where the false lyricism is of a platitude which the verbal ingenuity cannot redeem; nor even *The Dying Christian to His Soul,* an attempt at a religious effusion, prompted by literary reminiscences, reinforced by classical memories, but of a relative sobriety, of a rather fine tenor of style, in which is revealed the germ of an almost mystic spirituality which Pope owed to the Catholicism of his youth, and which will hardly develop beyond a philosophical deism.

But one must take more seriously two poems which claim to be impassioned, and are so in a large measure. The *Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady,* composed at an uncertain date and published in 1717, is the most romantic poem that Pope has written. By the subject, the setting, the sentiment, and the note of personal emotion, it is a sketch of that type of elegiac meditation in which the eighteenth century was to discover a vein of sentimental indulgence, complacent but sincere. There is here something of the future love of tears; and the seeking after this pleasure does not appear to be the only source of the tears. The form remains mediocre, the language conventional, despite fine poetic lines. *Eloisa to Abelard* (1717) leaves one with a mixed impression; in a classical rhythm, through themes complex and curious, among which one makes out the study of an erotic obsession, and an ill-disguised libertinage of fancy, the eloquent outpouring of a soul in torment is powerfully sustained. Never has Pope been nearer to true inspiration. The language itself bears the marks of an ardour which, on this occasion, at times, creates its form in untrammelled liberty. A force, a diffused audacity, are here concentrated in lines which are to be reckoned among the most certain preparations of Romanticism.

It is a rather analogous, but at the same time distinct element, that is to be found in the crude realism with which the correct art of Pope likes to be set off. What one should trace here is the taste for keen sensation, superadded to the intellectual desire for concrete truth; in other words, that aspect of realism by which it is closely related to the attitude of the Romanticists. This tendency of mind has urged Pope to "put into verse"—according to his own phrase—the satires of Donne; it is to be seen very clearly in the *Dunciad;* and a passage like that in which is evoked the brilliant, corrupting voluptuousness of the lands of sunshine and of art (4th book), proves that he possessed among his instincts the slumbering faculty, rarely awakened, of coloured suggestions, in which are united all the powers of the words, the images and the rhythm. Elsewhere, his imagination is severely kept in check by the sobriety, the selection and the moralising character of the themes, although it preserves throughout a robust quality. In such passages, it becomes truly the main inspiration and the mistress of the poetry.

But these traits remain exceptional. Through its central, voluntary impulse, Pope's art resolutely moves during the whole of his career, further away from the inner, secret, magnetic attraction which already is silently bending the course of literature towards a new ideal. The *Dunciad* reacts against the symptoms of an awakening of the middle-class spirit, against the "City poets," whom it holds responsible for the decadence in taste. Pope does not progress, consciously, towards the future, but confines himself in a severe and lofty notion of letters, by virtue of which he remains, despite everything, the heir of the Restoration.

7. Swift, Prior, Gay, etc.; Light Poetry.—The orthodox poetry of the classical age—that which responds to its central originality and to its desire—does not include any very great names beside that of Pope. But numerous are the noteworthy or estimable talents which apply the same standard to the art of writing in verse.

The temperaments, here, do not show very great variety; it is possible to examine this literary output as a whole, and to classify it according to the inner differences which separate the works.

In this way one recognises first of all a group, and that the most important, in which the tendencies apparent in the *Epistles and Satires* of Pope are carried still further. Not that Pope, in fact, has furnished the model: this familiar kind of rhymed conversation is a natural outcome of Restoration verse; and the persistent action of the French example contributes to encourage it. Saint-Evremond, on English soil, had written "petits vers" in the French manner; the continued radiation of French thought and influence is perceptible especially during the reign of Queen Anne in the ease with which this light, amorous, ironical or jocular verse is handled. The inspiration of a Prior, at times, is hardly national; and the reader scarcely discovers anything English in his work save the language.

The object of this poetry, the pleasure it calls forth, are indeed the same as those which the work of Pope had in view. But in place of ambitious themes of ethics, criticism or philosophy, Swift, Prior and Gay reduce the scope of invention, and concentrate it habitually in brief pieces, better suited to the lively expression of a witty amusement, a mockery or a paradox; and in obedience to the same instinct, the form is abridged or modified; the heroic couplet is most often replaced by the four-foot line, on which *Hudibras* had for ever left the imprint of its irreverence. And if there are any long poems to be found, they are almost all of a burlesque inspiration.

The personality of Swift is too strong not to break out in everything he writes.[1] The interest of his lines is that they reveal him to us; and to judge them by the wealth of their thought, the forcefulness of their eloquence, the vigour and the bitterness of the intentions with which they are loaded, they ought to make up the work of a first-rate poet. But this work, considerable as it is, is three-quarters composed of rapid improvisations, fugitive poems, where one feels the verve of genius; where the form, on the other hand, has not received the minute care demanded by classical finish. Elsewhere, more polished poems, or pieces in which creation has been so direct and sure that the idea and the words were born, so to speak, in an indestructible unity, have a very high quality, and rank beside the most successful productions of Pope, among the masterpieces of the poetry of this time. The clearness of the thought, the terseness of the language, the nimble movement of the verse with its clever irony, the unexpected picturesque rhymes, remind us of Butler; but with Swift there is greater suppleness, a more natural gift, an exactness of expression which, without the slightest effort, achieves wonderful effects of robust, unadorned, decisive simplicity; and the impression of art springs from this absolute propriety of terms. The measure, regular, and poor in its range of variations, adds nothing to this triumph of style save a mediocre musical value; and one can say that here classical poetry is, still more certainly than with Pope, a perfect prose, raised and carried forward by an adequate rhythm; by a cadence that is too sure, too imperious, not to force upon the inward ear an elementary prosodiacal feeling. To study the poetry of Swift would be to enter into the world of his mind; and it is not here that this should be fitly attempted.

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[1] See below, chap. iii. sect. 5. The poems of Swift were published by Mitford (Aldine edn.), 1866; and Browning, 1910.

Prior and Gay have fewer secrets to defend, or to reveal; and their moral being is almost entirely, or entirely, in their poetry, however superficial its inspiration may appear to be.

Superficiality is here a merit, or at least harmonises better with a form that is lively, light and rapid. The unpretentious poems of Prior and Gay are often charming; and even when mediocre, they preserve their ease and nimble elegance, their pert tone. On the contrary, the ambition of a great subject, the philosophic, moral, or lyrical effort, have a fatal effect upon them. And such, indeed, is the general character of this classical poetry, outside of the work of Pope.

Prior[1] knows how to be a *salon* poet, in the French style. His two epistles *To Fleetwood Shephard* show a witty inventiveness, a freedom of movement, a neat power of phrasing. Like Swift, he recalls Butler, in his octosyllabic measure and stressed rhymes. There is sincerity, along with wit, in many of these short poems (*A Song; The Secretary; Hans Carvel; The Lady's Looking Glass,* etc.); pieces of ironical or sensual badinage, which aim only at pleasing through the easy play of the intellect, the clever turn and pat fitness of the form, or the evocation of a purely unemotional love.

The inspiration of Gay[2] is a little more substantial. His light poems are not without merit, although they do not equal the supreme ease of Prior; one can discover here and there a note of conventional but pleasant lyricism, after the Restoration style (*Damon and Cupid*); a facile and piquant wantonness (*The Coquet Mother*); pretty touches, a rather genuine feeling for Nature, fresh landscapes, intermingled with all the prosaic paraphernalia of fishing and hunting, in *Rural Sports;* life, movement, humour in the songs of *The Beggar's Opera.* But among others that famous piece, *Sweet William's Farewell,* to-day seems to strike a very artificial note in its simplicity; and everywhere the "poetic diction" of this age is more or less cruelly felt. Gay, like Prior (in *Henry and Emma*), occasionally comes across popular and ballad themes; they reap some benefit from the transient contact, a fleeting accent (in *Down Hall,* etc.); but the interposing veil of pseudo-classical form hides from them the true character of this inspiration, and its promise.

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[1] Matthew Prior, born in 1664, of an artisan family, attracted the attention of the Earl of Dorset, studied at Westminster School, whence he proceeded to Cambridge. As early as 1687 he collaborated with Charles Montague in a parody of Dryden's poem, *The Hind and the Panther;* after the Revolution, he was attached to the English Embassy at the Hague, took part in the pourparlers of Ryswick, resided in Paris as diplomatic agent; had published, meanwhile, numerous odes and circumstantial poems. During the reign of Queen Anne, he figured as official poet, threw in his lot with the Tory party, helped Swift to publish *The Examiner,* and played a part of first importance in the negotiations which led to the Peace of Utrecht (1713); arrested on his return by the Whigs, he composed *Alma* while in prison; freed in 1717, he received the hospitality of his friends, in particular Lord Harley, and died in 1721. *Works,* ed. by Waller, 1905–7; *Selected Poems,* ed. by Dobson, 1889; *Shorter Poems,* ed. by Bickley, 1923. See the biography by Bickley (1914); the study by Legg (*M. Prior, A Study of his Public Career and Correspondence*), 1921.

[2] John Gay, born in Devon in 1685, became an orphan while yet very young, and as early as 1708 published a poem on *Wine;* this was followed by pastoral pieces, either in a serious vein (*Rural Sports,* 1713), or half burlesque (*The Shepherd's Week,* 1714); a heroic poem, *The Fan,* 1713; a farce, *The What D'ye Call It,* 1714, and a mock-heroic poem, *Trivia,* 1716. He led, meanwhile, a rather agitated life, suffered vicissitudes, depending mostly upon his friends and patrons for a livelihood and, at length, finding a

The originality of Gay's talent is to be found elsewhere: in a clear-sighted realism, with an inclination to irony, which alternates between the sense of and search for the picturesque, and parody. There is in him a kind of intellectual cynicism that knows how to see freely and make us actually see, and thus to emerge from convention; he renovates the superficial application of the classical ideal by virtue of the truth, concrete and therefore new and rich, of an object, even the most prosaic. His pastoral poem, *The Shepherd's Week,* claims to strike out boldly from the beaten path; it mixes archaisms, imitated from Spenser, with descriptions of the actual world of shepherds which are exact—or pretend to be so. Despite the strange contrast between an artificial literary language, and traits of rustic manners that are sometimes crude, and although under this crudity there still remain the traces of bookish lore, all this *fabliau* like verve is rather sincere, and not devoid of raciness. Gay's object was to ridicule the use made by Ambrose Philips, in his pastorals, of a background of English observation; unwittingly, he revealed all the fertile novelty of rural realism. *Trivia,* in three mock-heroic cantos, describes, narrates, and celebrates the sights, the incidents, the perils of London streets; while, in a style of the most orthodox, advice on the equipment of the pedestrian is set off by mythological episodes. Never was a subject less rich in poetry; but the art, which is here mainly a question of skill, wit and irony, extracts from this thankless matter a rather lively interest of mere form, in which the essential element is the piquancy of contrast; and because it describes with accuracy a definite local object, this poem has the value of an historical document.[1]

This vein of dry precision is one of the merits by which classical poetry often redeems the coldness of its inspiration. It is to be found even in the likeable though flaccid talent of Ambrose Philips; and his epistle *To the Earl of Dorset* describes the effects of a Danish winter with a sureness of touch which Thomson will not excel. But the precision of the vocabulary tends to become exceptional; the very development of the classical ideal contradicts it.

8. Descriptive and Didactic Poetry—Poetic Diction.—The more ambitious works of those estimable poets do not merit a long examination. The "pindaric" and official odes of Prior have all the verbose aridity of this kind, in which the classical age thinks it due to its dignity to exercise itself just as

permanent abode with the Duchess of Queensberry. His *Fables* (1727 and 1738) met with a great and lasting success; he was the friend of Pope and Swift, the latter of whom suggested to him the theme of *The Beggar's Opera* (1728), which was enthusiastically received; a sequel, *Polly,* was banned by the authorities (1729). Gay died in 1732. *Poetical Works,* ed. by Underhill, 1893; *Trivia,* ed. by Williams, 1922; *The Beggar's Opera,* ed. by MacLeod, 1906; republished with the music in 1921; historical study by Schultz, 1923. See the biography by Coxe, 1797; study by Hazlitt, *Lectures on English Poets* (*Works,* ed. by Waller, vols. v.).

[1] The taste for parody is again seen in the burlesque poem, entitled *The Splendid Shilling,* 1705, in which John Philips (1676–1709) imitated the style and blank verse of Milton.

much as the Restoration. Clever tricks of style, feats in the art of the versifier, no longer stir even a spark of animation in all this dead literature (*Carmen Seculare,* etc.). And if, at times, there does remain a touch of life, it is when the intention of parody introduces some satirical truth into the pompous conventionality (*Parody of the Ode of Boileau on the Taking of Namur, 1695*). Less happy, even in a relative measure, is the fancy to imitate the Spenserian stanza, modified by the addition of a final line of the most unfortunate effect (*Ode to the Queen, 1706*). *Alma, or the Progress of the Mind,* may very well relate in short Hudibrastic verse, and in a sometimes burlesque tone, the philosophic talk of three friends: Prior has not the comic fertility of Butler, his invention is feeble; and tediousness is the result. Still more quickly is this the case with the poem of grave import, of edifying intention, in which the wisdom of Ecclesiastes is garbed in heroic lines, somewhat more supple indeed, but still very regular (*Solomon, or the Vanity of the World*).

Despite their very great and lasting success in the eighteenth century, the *Fables* of Gay have not better stood the inroads of time. Here and there they have a piquant interest; but their short easy verse is of a jerky monotony; their theme is almost always mediocre, of a poor and forced invention; any impression of reality is destroyed by political allusions, or insipid gallantry; the animals reason and argue to excess; the ethics are coldly banal; and the tone of naïvety assumed is too obviously artificial. *The Fan* is a long drawn out and lifeless fancy; *Rural Sports,* where the pastoral has a serious aim, and at times succeeds in displaying some emotion, makes us regret, on the whole, the realism and the parody of *The Shepherd's Week.*

In these works of more ample design, that systematic attempt at fine language which has been termed "poetic diction," and which gradually becomes an essential element of classicism, gives itself full scope. This is not a matter of intention and principle; the theorists of the school are anxious to teach the art of writing well; but they define their ideal, as traditional wisdom will have it, in terms of measure, of sobriety; language, Pope says, ought to be the vestment of thought; nothing is more dangerous than false eloquence; where the foliage of words abounds, the fruits of sense are scarce. Such is the doctrine; an inward necessity, however, tends to lead practice further and further away from it.

Classical poetry, viewed as a whole, is rational in its inspiration. The themes it treats are, therefore, most often of an abstract nature; or at least, the development which is given them inclines to abstraction. For the choice of the terms, the quality of the style, are determined by a deep preference of the mind. Creative imagination, so to say, shows here an intellectual trend. The abstract style is not only a fact; it answers a need.

Now, this inner cause which produces it brings about at the same time other connected effects. Abstraction is in essence philosophic and general; it has the dignity of what rises above the particular; it is invested with the nobleness of universal affirmations. To think, feel, and write in the plane of "reason," is to legislate, even in verse, and on the humblest of subjects, for the men of all countries and of all ages. Besides, this nobleness does correspond with the consciousness which a writer has of his mission; classical art is a priesthood, by virtue of which the modern mind can raise itself, through deliberate imitation, to the level of the august quality of ancient literatures. And as the very character of antiquity is thus falsely conceived, warped into an ever self-conscious greatness, with a fondness for majesty, there radiates from the classical ideal, in so far as the Ancients are the object of its veneration, a constant resolve to maintain an unfailing standard of nobleness.

In what can this nobleness reside? No doubt, in the subjects chosen, first of all; these will often be philosophical and general. But noble subjects call necessarily for noble language, and it is through language that their dignity makes itself felt. On the other hand, some themes must inevitably be familiar and simple; but here intervenes still another effect of the classical ideal. Stress is not placed upon the originality of the idea, but upon the value of the form. The matter can be known, even commonplace, provided the manner rejuvenates it. This means that the expression ought to offer a character guarded and correct, and on the other hand forcible and striking, without which a time-worn thought will not be able to command attention. The search for verbal intensity, within the limits imposed by severe and correct taste, is another source of the systematic dignity of this poetry. Thus it is that the frigidness of an inspiration born of reason tends to clothe itself in an abstract language, that is to say also in a general language, and one which seeks its energy in the nobleness of its terms.

Nobleness, when it is the outcome of choice, is contrary to simplicity. Classical poetry, therefore, refuses on principle to be nurtured upon the expressive force of concrete, familiar terms, which savour of the freshness of life itself. While society is becoming more deeply permeated with middle-class influence, an aristocratic purism takes possession of literature; art aims at distinction, and turns away with instinctive repugnance from what is low. Periphrase, most often, springs from no other cause. It is by thus losing touch with Nature and with reality, rich as it is in immediate meaning and in an inexhaustible wealth of suggestion, that the language of poetry isolates itself from the necessary sources of living expression. In order to re-establish this indispensable correspondence, a vigorous effort will be required, such as that which Wordsworth will have the courage to make, and of which he will formulate the theory.

But that is not all: the "poetic diction" of the eighteenth century, over and above this diffuse and widespread quality, becomes concentrated in stereotyped expressions which are transmitted from poet to poet. The language of poetry thus becomes conventional, in that it no longer answers to a choice, to a verbal creation, but to a mechanical art, to passive devices. The cause must be sought in the doctrine of imitation now set up as a principle, in the constitution of an official taste, and of a hierarchy of literary works; in the influence both of the Ancients, whom Modern after Modern proposes to follow, and of the models established by the new writers. To this fund of ready-made elegance in diction thus contribute Latinisms, and frequently Hellenisms, both of vocabulary and of syntax; and also, the terms which have passed into circulation from the poetry of the Renaissance, with a meaning that most often was then precise, close to concrete truth, and which frequent use, gradually removing them from their primitive value, transforms into purely arbitrary signs, whose present dignity is made up of their very vagueness, of their association with the work of writers whom time has consecrated. The history of words such as "swain," or "steed," or "dale," and of their progressive entry into the conventional vocabulary of poetry, allows one to grasp the very general fact of this change.

Lastly, and especially, one must look for the cause of that mechanism in the withering-up of living inspiration, the substitution of literary motives for spontaneous impulses, and the tendency towards verbalism which results from it. "Poetic diction" only takes on its special colouring from the time when it is severed from all direct or immediate relationship with the life of a thought, be it a rational life. It is not only characterised by generality, or by abstraction and nobleness, but also by death.

The store of cut-and-dried language which is thus created, with its unchanging epithets, its inseparable associations of terms, its stereotyped expressions, its periphrases, would therefore not have triumphed over the vital instinct which guides poetry towards the coining of new forms, had it not been demanded by the deep nature of the inspiration itself. But in so far as classicism implies an artistic desire, its conscious effort does encourage this degeneration of style. For the best writers of the Restoration had extolled the search after elegant brilliant phrases, after the pattern of the "felicities of expression" of the Ancients. These "turns," recommended by Dryden (*Essay on Satire*) were, for the minds that had been nourished in the best school of letters, to take the place of the quips, the "conceits" of preciosity, from which the seventeenth century in its closing years sought to free itself. As mechanism was little by little replacing life, and choice was stiffening into mere docility, the "turns" themselves in the end gave rise to stock forms of expression. And thus obscurely, the remains of precious taste, the spirit of verbal affectation, which classicism had not been able to destroy completely, contributed to the formation of this set of epithets, phrases and terms, which from the time of Pope, and especially after his day, overloaded poetry with a fossilized and unbearable elegance. Poetic diction is already perceptible in the Pope of *Windsor Forest*, to whom shepherds are decidedly "swains," fish "the scaly breed," the sea "the watery plains"—developed, and yet vague formulæ, in which most often the concrete quality of the object, abstracted and therefore impaired, is rendered by a derived adjective, and referred to a neutral term, which suggests the fundamental identity of substances to the reasoning mind. This diction is more marked with the Pope of the *Iliad;* it develops with Gay (above all in the *Fables*). Swift, whose rough sincerity sees through all growing affectations, is almost immune from it, and even jeers at it on occasion (*Ode on Science; A Love Song in the Modern Taste*, etc.).

9. The Exceptional Note in Poetry; Tickell, Parnell, Allan Ramsay, etc. —Even at the heart of classicism, however, and with the poets who remain most faithful to its ideal, there are elements that refuse to be reduced to it. The early years of Pope had their flashes of romanticism, and something of that ardour was never extinguished. Several of his contemporaries, in all the aridity of their orthodox poetry, offer us nooks of unexpected freshness.

These are for the most part third-rate poets, whose temperaments are wavering, and who have not known how to enter into a broad and easy agreement with the spirit of the time, as did Prior and Gay. Their very mediocrity leaves them greater independence; and while they vainly attempt to equal classical perfection, they will occasionally avoid it with unconscious felicity.

Tickell,[1] in the rest of his work, is an imitator, and indeed better than a mere follower. But his elegy *To the Earl of Warwick, on the Death of Mr. Addison,* is a justly famous poem, sincere in its emotion, which does not dare to be simple, and invests itself in pompous phraseology, but elevates it with the ardour of inspiration; and the music of his sentiment has here found for its suggestion a rhythm which is truly funereal, organ notes one might say, whilst the great images of death are evoked. None of the traits of elegiac romanticism is absent, not even the avowal of the bitter pleasure the poet finds in grief.

Thomas Parnell,[2] the disciple of Pope, to whose Homer he furnished the help of his relative erudition, would only be remembered by some facile regular line, and *The Hermit,* a poem very much admired in the eighteenth century, but spoiled by the worst artificiality of style, if he had not written *A Night Piece on Death,* where in a form that remains too classical he already gives utterance to the sentiment of Gray's *Elegy.*

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[1] Thomas Tickell, 1688–1740, published at the same time as Pope a translation of the first book of the *Iliad,* the source of the rupture between Pope and Addison; the favorite disciple of Addison, he edited the latter's works after his death in 1721, and subjoined his famous elegy. His writings consist almost exclusively of circumstantial pieces.

[2] Thomas Parnell, 1679–1718, born in Dublin, took holy orders, was friendly with Swift, and Pope, who published his posthumous poems: *Poems on Several Occasions,* 1722. *Poetical Works,* ed. by Aitken, 1894.

One can see a sign of the same order, an obscure, timid need of renovation through the suppleness of grace, in the affected versicles of Ambrose Philips,[1] which have the fault of being very consciously puerile, but which convey something of the charm of childhood, and with their rhythm know how to recall the Milton of *l'Allegro.* And the softness of his pastorals relaxes and lightens the language of classicism into a rather pleasant fluidity.

But it is with Allan Ramsay,[2] the Scottish poet, that classicism, without abjuring itself in any way, offers the most composite character. His *Gentle Shepherd* is a curious mixture of literary convention and rural realism, in which the conventional note is still dominant. At least there is in this poem the instinct of what native genius and popular poetry will one day be able to produce. The language is made up of English poetic diction, seasoned with Scottish dialect; the line retains the regular run of the couplet, diversified with the free rhythm of songs. The whole, despite much artificiality, has freshness, character, and that shrewd humour which lends to the very solemnity of the classical tone an air of semi-consciousness, and almost of irony.

To be consulted: *Cambridge History of English Literature,* vol. ix., chaps. iii. and iv.; Courthope, *History of English Poetry,* vol. v, 1905; Dennis, *The Age of Pope,* 1906; Doughty, *English Lyrics in the Age of Reason,* 1923; Hazlitt, *The English Poets* (*Works,* ed. by Waller, vol. ii, 1894); Johnson, *Lives of the Poets,* 1781; ed. by Hill, 1906; Neilson, *Essentials of Poetry,* 1912; Saintsbury, *History of Criticism,* vol. ii., 1902; *History of English Prosody,* vol. ii., 1908; Spence, *Anecdotes,* etc., ed. by Singer, 1858; Ward, *The English Poets,* vol. iii., 1884; Joseph Warton, *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope,* 1756–82.

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[1] Ambrose Philips, 1675–1749, published his *Pastorals* in the same year as Pope (1709) and attracted the latter's animosity; gathered together *A Collection of Old Ballads,* 1723; imitated *Andromaque* in *The Distrest Mother,* 1712. The nickname of "Namby-Pamby" which has remained connected with Philips suggests the idea of sugary sentimentality.

[2] Allan Ramsay, 1686–1758, was the most brilliant representative of a revival in Scottish literature, which took place under the influence of national inspiration. *The Gentle Shepherd,* 1725; *The Tea-Table Miscellany,* 1724–32. *Works,* 2 vols, 1877.

CHAPTER III

THE SPIRIT OF CONTROVERSY

1. **Critical Thought and Prose.**—The age of classicism broadens and intensifies the practice of free rational enquiry, which the Restoration was able, or wanted, to apply only in a rather incomplete way. The effort of critical thought is at the very heart of this age. Contemporary poetry finds therein its true inspiration; and as such inspiration is not in itself creative of any rhythmic expression, the art of writing in verse is led to set up for itself as an end the search for adequate form, and expends its energy entirely in this search.

Outside the field of poetry, there stretches the vast domain in which polemical intelligence gives itself fuller scope. As one passes from the poets to the polemists of Reason, one has the impression of remaining in the same literary and moral plane; from the first to the second, there is continuity and imperceptible change. With the latter, the care of the form is no longer paramount, or is no longer reinforced by the strict laws of regular measure. Thought concentrates on the discussion and solution of problems; art is a superadded need. But as the mind is delivered from former constraints, and broken to the practice of liberty; moreover, as it has created for two generations past a style adapted to the clear statement of ideas, the æsthetic quality is here no longer distinguishable from the justness and the force of the reasoning. The prose of the classical age has merits that are often superior, almost always solid, and the least of these merits is not that they have not been sought after; they spring from the limpidity, the finesse, the vigour with which the energy of intelligence makes itself felt.

Only with some writers of this time has the prose a character of more conscious and refined art. They belong to the group in which purely rational inspiration is diversified with motives of another order. Addison carries the scruple of style very far. On the contrary, it is without desiring to be so, at least directly, that Swift is one of the great masters of English prose. His main object was to be a polemist. His supremely ironical work must be viewed in the atmosphere of the controversies where philosophy, religion, politics and science wage unceasing war, carried away as they are by the inner enthusiasm of dogmatic or, more frequently, critical affirmation.

2. **The Deistic Quarrel; Joseph Butler.**—The opening years of the eighteenth century are astir with religious controversies. Reason growing bolder sets to work upon the obscure parts of religion, and wants to shed upon them the rays of a natural light. Such an enterprise appears destructive to the essential beliefs of Christianity, and apologists rise up in their defence. On either side, the arguments are of a similar order; they appeal to the authority alone of reasoning. After a varied history, the victory seems to rest with the champions of orthodoxy. But they have wounded themselves with the very weapons they employed; a long and bitter struggle leaves the public mind uncertain and weary, and inclining towards indifference or scepticism.

The men who submit to a purely human test the nucleus of revelation which the Reformation had preserved, prolong the line of critical thought which had been traced out by Protestantism in the sixteenth century. But in the seventeenth they have more direct predecessors. Lord Herbert of Cherbury had found in internal evidence the data which sufficed for a philosophical creed. At a later date, Locke demonstrated the "reasonableness" of Christianity (1695), while Charles Blount (*Anima Mundi,* 1679) had given a systematic form to the thesis of a religion according to Nature. The deep-seated need for rationality which is the characteristic feature of this age was to emphasize the latent conflict between revealed dogma and the demands of intellectual judgment; whilst the rivalries of sects, and their mutual persecutions, by weakening the prestige of the churches, drove the freest minds to enquire after a lay form of belief.

The Deists of the classical age, with some timidity at first, then with aggressive daring, carry these tendencies to their necessary conclusion. They are looked upon by their contemporaries, whose feelings they have shocked, as impious infidels. At the present day, the perspective of time enables us to better understand them. Theirs, on the whole, were temperaments keenly desirous of a truth that was rational, of sincerity, more than of a useful, passive conformity, or of humbleness. Their attempt to join up the domain of Reason with that of Faith points to the effort by which Locke had established their equivalence. If religion conforms entirely with good sense, they say, it cannot be in any way contrary to it; and so where religious tradition has some mystery to offer, some apparent absurdity, it is religious tradition that is at fault. Several of the capital tenets of Christianity are thus endangered; and the Establishment, the clergy and the hierarchy, become quite human and arbitrary institutions. It is no wonder, therefore, that Deism, despite the very positive character which it did not want to relinquish, should have been denounced almost universally as a doctrine of negation pure and simple.

The series of its outstanding works opens with the *Christianity not Mysterious* of Toland[1] (1696), which deduces from the idea itself of revelation the necessity for an intelligible belief, and makes no distinction between faith and clear cognition. A Catholic by birth, Toland evolves towards Protestant liberalism, then towards the Anglican Church, and finally towards an independent pantheism. The *Discourse of Free Thinking* of Collins (1713) draws from the principle of rational liberty, which the latitudinarian theologians had accepted without reserve, consequences which were destructive with regard to the authority of the clergy. The *Discourses on the Miracles of Our Saviour* by Woolston (1727) are animated by a spirit of ironic hostility against priests, the jealous custodians of tradition; he assails the official version of the Miracles in the New Testament, where he believes that he can make out improbable or absurd elements, and concludes in favour of the wholly symbolical and spiritual character of the Sacred Book, which, he declares, should strengthen the prestige of a reasonable religion. The work of Tindal (*Christianity as Old as the Creation,* 1730) draws the general conclusions resulting from the application of Reason alone to religious problems. He starts from the very formulæ of contemporary theology, which affirmed the accord between faith by revelation and natural faith, and from it deduces the superfluousness of the first, or at least, submits it entirely to the control of the second. Finally, Peter Annet, in *The Resurrection of Jesus Examined by a Moral Philosopher* (1744) concludes openly by disbelieving one of the vital articles of traditional Christianity.

Such theses roused the ire of many, and called forth a great number of refutations. Denounced and condemned by the Church authorities, worried in some cases by the civil power, the Deists avoid for the most part the rigorous application of the law, by being prudent in their language; they most often declare that they are still Christians, and only desire to rid religion of the dross of unreason. But the significance of their writings does not escape the orthodox believers. Armed with a knowledge that is usually superior, and with equal intellectual sharpness, the champions of the Church find fault with the erudition, the character or the private life of their adversaries, just as much as with their dialectics. The Deistic controversy is remarkably violent.

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[1] John Toland, 1669–1722; Anthony Collins, 1676–1729; Thomas Woolston, 1669–1731; Matthew Tindal, 1656–1733. For the deistic movement see Leslie Stephen, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century,* vol. i.; and J. M. Robertson, *Short History of Free Thought,* 1906.

Among all the apologists are to be singled out Clarke,[1] Warburton and Butler. The first, a man of supple and versatile mind, brings to the controversy his scientific knowledge, his acquaintance with philosophical questions, and a somewhat formal rigour of mind. He refutes Deism in the name of logic and metaphysics. His *Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God* (1704), and his *Discourse Concerning Natural Religion and the Christian Revelation* (1705), leave a lasting trace upon English philosophy in the eighteenth century. Those souls which are perturbed by the negative tendencies of religious rationalism here find an orthodox conciliation of Reason with Faith. Clarke has notions methodically linked up together about the existence and the attributes of God; from the wisdom and goodness of the Creator he draws very clear conclusions as to the good and evil in human actions, and boldly intellectualises ethics. His theory of the pre-established "fitnesses" of things will stimulate the robust irony of Fielding.

Warburton is not less of a reasoner, and adds the telling keenness of an aggressive eloquence to the weight and force of arguments. A theologian, moralist, political writer, literary critic and editor of Shakespeare, the future Bishop of Gloucester supplies the figure of the classical age with one of its significant traits. He raises the passion for debate to its climax, in a century when the faculty of persuasion has unlimited confidence in itself. Less richly gifted and with less originality and humour, he is like a first sketch of Johnson. The friend and favourite disciple of Pope, he systematises to excess the moral ideas of his master, and makes himself the spirited defender of the orthodoxy of the *Essay on Man.* His *Divine Legation of Moses Demonstrated on the Principles of a Religious Deist* (1737–1741) belabours at great length a thesis which for the needs of the cause at issue he treats as a strong point of his adversaries.

Anglican apologetics reach their culminating point with Joseph Butler.[2] His effort has given to the whole century a feeling of philosophical security against the threats of criticism; he has awed doubt, and comforted faith; and in the estimation of his contemporaries, has finally conquered Deism. Nothing is more English than his *Analogy.* Its method is severely intellectual, but inducive; in its general trend, it takes up again the favourite argument of the adversaries of revelation; it discovers in reality a scheme of natural religion; but it also finds in it an imperious invitation to go beyond the latter, and rise to the full belief of the Christian. The point of departure is thus the analysis of the data of human experience.

The life of man, when properly tested, reveals its own insufficiency; it necessarily implies a system of ends, logical but concealed from our understanding, where our earthly destiny is inserted between two mysteries, upon which

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[1] Samuel Clarke, 1675–1729; William Warburton, 1698–1779.

[2] Joseph Butler, born in 1692, took orders, published in 1726 his *Sermons* which exposed his moral ideas and in 1736 *The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature,* which quickly acquired the authority of a decisive demonstration. Bishop of Durham in 1750, he died in 1752. *Works,* ed. by Bernard, 1900.

Revelation projects the only possible light. The mainspring of this reasoning lies in analogy, that is to say in the instinctive application to the whole order of the universe of a principle of continuity taught us by experimental reality; analogy governs our acts in virtue of the law which commands us to obey an enlightened view of our interest; it produces faith, according to this rule of the mind that an extremely strong probability is equivalent to a certitude. Thus this doctrine, which, at times, makes us think of Pascal, recalls rather the argument of the wager than the thesis of knowledge by way of the heart; utilitarian and relativist, it is already set in the direction in which the pragmatism of our times has developed.

Despite the ingenuity, the subtlety of which it gives proof, by showing that in the Christian dogma lies the necessary crowning of empirical wisdom, it owes its force to its realism. It has a grasp of the true and actual conditions of human life, of the silent and scarcely conscious inductions by which are determined the tacit inferences of our thought. It analyses Nature in a mood that wishes to be objective; it probes it, without showing it the secret complacency of the Deist; it perceives the character of things with a sober lucidity, that inclines to pessimism. It has therefore exercised a deep and durable influence. But while it is relatively realistic for its century, it is no longer sufficiently so for ours. To-day, its postulates are immediately visible. The science of Nature and that of man have come to be seen in a new light. To us the universe appears infinitely more complex than when Butler viewed it; and the lesson of a kind of implicit Christianity has ceased to emanate from it for those who are uninitiated; indeed it was not there, save on condition of having been first of all put there. Belief, just as incredulity, invokes other arguments to-day. Butler's system remains one of the most vigorous products of English thought in the eighteenth century; through its quiet anthropomorphism, its full confidence in Reason, which empiricism limits but does not weaken, through the assurance with which it metes out its share to mystery, and deciphers the plan of existence as if it were some familiar and simple text, it fitly represents a time when it seemed to be the extremity of modest caution to accept the view that the Beyond was not completely intelligible.

3. Political Thought: Bolingbroke, Mandeville.—Bolingbroke[1] is in secret or avowed sympathy with Deism; he it is who furnished Pope with the outlines of the religious philosophy laid down in the *Essay on Man* which was not without awakening much uneasiness on the side of orthodoxy. His posthumous essays reveal an attitude of intellectual irony with regard to the superstitions with which, he hints, primitive religion based upon Nature had saddled itself throughout the centuries. Though this disrespect is aimed, for the most part, at paganism or at Roman Catholic rites, yet a set purpose of free thinking as to the historical elements of Christianity is ill disguised. But Bolingbroke is also a political writer, an historian, a moralist. His figure of a great nobleman, enlightened, scheming, sceptical, a patron of the arts, and concealing very keen personal disappointments beneath a mask of superior indifference, is very interesting. He played a foremost part in the literature and the life of the classical age.

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[1] Henry Saint-John, born in 1678, of ancient family, was by birth destined for a public career; he shared with Harley the leadership of the Tory government of 1710, and in 1712 was created Viscount Bolingbroke; the death of Queen Anne in 1714 interrupted his plans for a Jacobite Restoration and caused him to flee to France, where he was attached as Secretary to the Pretender. Allowed to return to England in 1723, he was excluded from the House of Lords, and bitterly opposed the Whig minister, Walpole. After a further residence of seven years in France (1735–42), he resigned himself to the complete failure of his political hopes, and died in 1751. His works were published by Mallet and comprise *Letters on the Study and Use of History*, 1736; a letter on *The Spirit of Patriotism*, 1736; *The Idea of a Patriot King*, 1738; and letters or treatises such as *Remarks upon the History of England*, and *A Dissertation upon Parties*, published in the *Craftsman*, the organ of the opposition to Walpole, from 1727 to 1731. See Churton Collins, *Bolingbroke*, 1886; W. Sichel, *Bolingbroke and His Times*, 1901–2; Hassall, *Life of Bolingbroke*, 1915; Butler, *The Tory Tradition* (Bolingbroke, Burke, Disraeli, Salisbury), 1914.

His ethics and his philosophy have nothing original about them. His general views on the origins of the English Constitution, or on the recent struggles waged in the name of the balance of Europe, have breadth and penetration, but belong to literature rather than to history. It is in the domain of politics that his thought has attempted a personal synthesis. Of a clear, alert, even a realistic mind, he understood that the weaknesses of the parliamentary system, more obvious every day with its success, would offer to a statesman the elements of a positive doctrine, capable of rallying round him all the forces of reaction, which by comparison would become forces of progress. To what extent was the opportunist Toryism thus constituted sincere? It seems that Bolingbroke threw his feelings into it, at the same time as he staked upon it his political fortune. He shows up in a very strong light the excesses of party rivalry, chases away like idle phantoms the antiquated jealousy of a royal absolutism from henceforth doomed; evokes the principles of the Revolution of 1688, and claims to apply them better than the corrupt administration openly practised by Walpole; urging all good citizens to be reconciled, he singles out the national idea as the means to unify wills no less than interests; and places at the head of a unanimous nation a prince who shares the feelings of his subjects, who has a deep sense of his duties, and is the living symbol of the fatherland.

This apology for a renewed and modernised monarchy, associated with the theme of patriotism, now becoming a distinct sentiment, and based on the moral forces of imagination and the emotions, was to be brilliantly successful in the nineteenth century. It is impossible not to perceive in Bolingbroke a kind of unconscious cynicism from the way he handles these psychological main-springs of action. He is too clear a thinker, too clever in his ambition, to allow us to believe in a deep enthusiasm of feeling; and he is too desirous of speaking the language of impassioned conviction, to invest his arguments with the pure virtue of direct simplicity. The eloquence with which he pleads his cause is animated, warm, but never soul-stirring, and wakens in the reader a secret uneasiness. But as a writer he has distinguished merits; his language, a trifle ornate, is full without losing in firmness, and has a natural rhythm, an easy harmonious sense of balance, which secure a place for it among the brilliant examples of classical prose.

Mandeville[1] also applies a lucid analytic mind to the examination of the political and moral basis of society. But his enquiry burrows and dissects in quite another way. Conceived in the same spirit of rationalism, it sacrifices nothing to the eloquence of sentiment. It recalls Hobbes by the unrelentingly keen spirit of the research. Still more realistic than with the author of *Leviathan,* it does not superimpose a system of social metaphysics on the cold scrutiny of what exists.

The intention which animates these short treatises, as original as they are frankly cynical, is the wish to get at the forbidden or obscure truth of things; at that truth, hurtful to the preferences and sentimental habits of man as a social being, and against which manners, conventions, and psychological life itself, have erected countless barriers. The uncompromising rationalism of Mandeville is singularly in advance of the movement of modern thought, and in order to find its posterity, one has to come right to the "immoralist" thinkers and psycho-analysts of contemporary times. His thesis is that politics, with its deep inner dependences and hidden relations, links up moral behaviour with the success of States according to formulæ quite different from those established or imposed by the official theory of conduct. This latter makes no distinction between the duty of the individual and that of a people, and affirms that for the former as for the latter prosperity is bound up with virtue. In fact, Mandeville declares, a nation is only rich and powerful through the vices and the corruption which are inextricably interwoven with its activities of every kind. London is the centre of a flourishing commerce, and the filthiness of its streets is evidence of the fact. How can one hope to have them absolutely clean, without at the same time desiring that they should be less seething with trade? To unite austere virtues with the refinements of civilisation, is a vain Utopia. In a republic of merchants, all compete to rob and cheat their neighbours more; the egoism of each will become the happiness of all, provided a wise government harmonises and reconciles all these blind forces through limiting the ones by the others. Similarly, ethics are purely conventional. Each person, by nature, thinks only of himself. But society requires altruism; it produces it, cultivates it, by rewarding it with praises and honours; and men, vainglorious dupes, do through pride what their instinct urges them not to do.

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[1] Bernard Mandeville, a medical practitioner of Dutch origin, born in 1670, settled in London and published in 1705 a philosophical poem, *The Grumbling Hive, or Knaves Turned Honest;* republished in 1714, then in 1723, with notes, remarks, additions, etc., under the title *The Fable of the Bees; or Private Vices Public Benefits.* He also published *Free Thoughts on Religion,* 1720; *The Origin of Honour,* and *The Usefulness of Christianity in War,* 1732; and died in 1733. See the study of Sakmann, 1897; Kaye, edition of *The Fable of the Bees,* with introd., etc., 1925.

Such is, at least, the active thought of Mandeville, and that which radiates imperiously from his work. On the surface, he respects moral observances; theoretical duty and absolute uncompromisingness, in accordance with official watchwords, retain their prestige; and the authority of principles is held up above all infringement. In fact, this apparent orthodoxy only heightens, by a kind of silent irony, the contrast, endlessly suggested, between the public reasons for and the real motives of human conduct.

Although thus veiled by transparent reserves, these analyses reveal a robust mind, firmly resolved to shake off the universal authority of fictitious values; rough, and rather indelicate, overstepping the correct limits, unmindful of fine shades; but sound, and animated by a scientific will. What would its conclusion be? Probably a clear-sighted wisdom, the outcome of moral modesty. It is directed against the austere professors of a puritanism which adapts itself very well, in reality, to deception in social life, and to cheating in business; it also has in view the idealistic and sentimental optimism of Shaftesbury. In the political order of things, it seems as it were an anticipatory outline, traced by an "enfant terrible," of the system of the liberal economists. In the moral order, it is in deep-set agreement with the corrosive intuitions of Swift. It appears in a sense to prelude the denunciations of Rousseau, to show up the inward rottenness of the industrial civilisation which is in course of development; but while Mandeville actually places the happiness that is least imperfect in a poor, frugal and limited society, he labours under no illusion as to the appeal of such an ideal, and does not propose seriously to return to the state of Nature. Finally, there are in his work the germs of a revolutionary criticism of the established order; he allows us to see the inequalities, the injustice, the lies upon which this order rests. Here again, Mandeville is only a precursor, and his anarchism remains implicit. As a political theorist, he gives us a lesson of intellectual liberty, and throws new light upon the complexity of social facts; as a psychologist and moralist, he belongs, except in the matter of literary talent, to the line of Machiavelli and Nietzsche.

4. **Erudition and Literary Criticism.**—On that intellectual battlefield, the classical age, a war of learning and literary scholarship is also waged.

Bentley[1] and Dennis dominate a numerous group of humanists and critics by the vigour of their faculty of arguing, not less than by their knowledge or their doctrine.

The quarrels of the scholars touch too closely upon the origins of faith, not to be interwoven with religious discussions; Bentley is an upholder of orthodoxy; he refutes atheism, and violently attacks the deist, Collins. But it is against other adversaries that he carries out his finest campaigns. To a minute knowledge of ancient texts, he joins an instinctive sense of method, a strong critical shrewdness, and above all the divining gift for truth. Once he has formed his conclusions, he defends them with extraordinary force, in a style that is compact, cogent and at the same time racy, capable of irony, concrete vigour and eloquence. Though he claims—as one might expect—to be the most pacific of men, the joy of fighting, the intoxication of a victory foreseen, expected, and enjoyed, cast a glow over the five hundred pages of his *Dissertation upon the Epistles of Phalaris.* There is something about Bentley that is better than the literary erudite, or the controversialist; he is already a modern savant. He explains literature and philology by means of linguistics; he makes, or opens the way for, many a discovery by turning to Greek dialects, metrics, and monuments. Nothing is wanting to this mind, save a certain detachment, the salutary liberation from one's self, the fine perception of superior artistic fitness. Thus we see his dogmatism and personal sentiment in the end crushing out his critical prudence; and his edition of Milton, strewn as it is with gratuitous corrections, is the strange error of an adventurous fancy.

In leaving the field of the old literatures, Bentley was quitting the solid ground, every corner of which he had explored. He stands as the greatest and last witness of the incomparable prestige of Greco-Latin humanism. By a rather paradoxical fate, his part in the quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns is not, superficially, what one might be led to expect. In demonstrating that the so-called *Epistles of Phalaris* are not authentic, he destroys an argument utilised by Sir William Temple to establish the superiority of the Ancients (1690); and thus makes it possible for Swift to castigate, as having contemned them, the very man of his time who knew them best (*The Battle of the Books*).

In principle, Dennis[2] is for the Ancients; Shakespeare, he holds, is inferior to them despite his great merits, because he violated the unities, of which they were the inventors. But a background of national temperament comes to light in Dennis; he places Milton, from certain points of view, above Vergil. Very self-willed, his mind has firmness, and his abusive violence knows how to sting. He makes an interesting effort to deepen the grounds of criticism, to analyse the philosophical elements of the beautiful. His objections to Pope's *Essay on Criticism* are often telling. While his attempt to explain the value of ancient poetry by its intimate fusion with religion is paradoxical, he already outlines, very clearly, the ethical theory of art, which is rooted in English instincts. He inveighs against Italian Opera in the name of the dignity and seriousness of the stage, and assigns to the poet the duty of instructor and reformer. At the very heart of classicism, an ideal coloured with morality comes to free and define itself, opening up one of the avenues by which sentiment will steal into the stronghold.

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[1] Richard Bentley, born in 1662, in Yorkshire, studied at Cambridge, then was appointed tutor to the Stillingfleet family, becoming a man of vast learning. After several years at Oxford, he became Royal librarian in 1694, and in 1700 was elected to the Mastership of Trinity College, Cambridge. His long life, fully devoted to work and controversy, maps itself out according to his treatises, sermons, commentaries, editorial contributions, letters, replies, etc.; particularly: *Epistola ad Joannem Millium*, 1691; *A Confutation of Atheism*, 1692–1713; *A Dissertation upon the Epistles of Phalaris*, 1699; edition of Horace, 1711; *Remarks upon a Late Discourse of Free-Thinking* (by Collins), 1713; Milton's *Paradise Lost*, a new edition, 1732. *Works*, ed. by A. Dyce, 1838. See Jebb, *Bentley* (English Men of Letters), 1902.

[2] John Dennis, 1657–1734, travelled in France and Italy, wrote for the stage, replied to Jeremy Collier, and led from 1700 onwards the life of a professional critic, in bitter conflict with most of the great writers of his time. He published *The Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry*, 1701; *The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry*, 1704; *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespeare*, 1712, etc. See H. G. Paul, *John Dennis*, 1911; Lenz, *J. D.*, 1913.

5. The Criticism of Manners; Satire, Comedy, Memoirs.—The spirit of satire is present everywhere in the classical age; it forms by itself or when allied with other elements, the inspiration of a great part of the poetry; the work of Pope is full of it. But outside of Pope, the formal satire in verse declines, and tends to become artificial; it will revive, however, under the influence of political motives, in the middle of the century. The satires of Young (*The Universal Passion*, 1725-28) are very estimable declamations; those of the young Smollett (*Advice*, 1746; *Reproof*, 1747) will prove to be merely the exercises of a schoolboy. The rational criticism of manners is being diffused into manifold literary expressions, and the prose of comedy, of the novel, of letters and memoirs, as that of sermons and pamphlets, furnishes it with a more supple instrument.

Generally speaking, the theatre of the classical age does not belong to the central current of literature; it reveals rather the divergent or complementary aspects of the epoch; the comedy of Colley Cibber or Steele, the drama of Rowe, have their place in the study of middle-class inspiration, or of the dawn of sentimentalism. An exception must be made for the correct tragedy in which Addison, more mindful on this occasion of the rules than of his moralising ideal, gave the most finished imitation of the French model (*Cato*, 1713). In fact, the influence of the French dramatists continues to be felt throughout the reign of Queen Anne; the adaptations of Racine and Corneille are numerous; and Ambrose Philips's *Distrest Mother*, 1712 (*Andromaque*), is only the most famous. However, the actual life of the dramatic art is to be found elsewhere.

Again it is not to be found in the expiring tradition of the Restoration. No doubt the licentiousness of the stage is not put to flight by the clarion call of Collier; indeed, it disappears only very gradually; the comedies of Mrs. Centlivre[1] show skill and movement, but vainly attempt to conceal an extremely crude frankness of tone beneath a final repentance of the wrongdoers. It is the change in society, in manners and in taste, that is shifting dramatic interest on to new subjects; and the old themes visibly are becoming exhausted.

If one had to look in the theatre for a brilliant comedy that voiced very well the tone of classical literature, it would be *The Beggar's Opera*.[2] The spirit of parody is the very soul of the play; it is the facile sentimentalism of many contemporary pieces that Gay's biting and ironical talent is here assailing. But the scope of the parody is wider; it is heightened by a political and moral satire, and even—in no very serious intention—by a kind of deliberate reversing of values, symbolised by the confusing of the social planes to which art is accustomed, that recalls Mandeville and Swift.

Similarly, the memoirs of the time, a fertile literary kind, reveal the intensity of the group and party spirit, and of society life. The savour of scandal which Mrs. Manley has been able to give to her fictitious and transparent tales (*New Atlantis*, 1709), is fairly closely allied to the attraction which urges a Lord Hervey[3] to write. The dominant tone, in this latter work, is that of an almost universal severity; and one can scarcely avoid feeling in it the systematic, ingrained temper of a judgment bent on unkindness.

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[1] 1680–1722; *A Bold Stroke for a Wife*, 1717.

[2] By Gay (1728). See above, chap. ii. sect. 7.

[3] 1696–1743; *Memoirs of the Reign of George the Second*, ed. by Croker, 1848. See also the *Diary of Lady Cowper* (1714–20), ed. by Sp. Cowper, 1864.

There would be no artificiality in classing the letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu[1] with these works of so very diverse a nature, but of a psychologically similar inspiration. The tone of her moral personality harmonises with that of temperaments which are intellectual, free and critical. She is not exempt from some dryness, and even from a dash of cynicism. She is vivacious, witty, has an original gift of observation, a faculty for understanding the different exotic modes of life, and for painting them, a cultured taste, some pretension to philosophy, and with that a practical sense, and a great variety of interests. Despite the ease of her style, her correspondence, which she revised and which in every way is steeped in literary intentions, cannot be compared, as she hoped it would be, with that of Madame de Sévigné. She revealed the Turkish Orient to the general English public; and her friendships, her enmities, her famous quarrel with Pope, who was her admirer before he assailed her with biting irony, all give a rich documentary value to the story of her life.

The vein of satiric description, closely allied to that of parody, which runs at the very heart of the classical age, crops out again in a whole literature of burlesque, where artistic and scholarly inspiration rejoins popular realism. Below the *Dunciad* of Pope, the *Beggar's Opera* of Gay, the *Gulliver's Travels* of Swift, and beside the *Splendid Shilling* of John Philips, one must not forget the *Hudibras Redivivus* of Ned Ward (1708), in short lines after the style of Butler, nor the *Amusements Serious and Comical* of Tom Brown (1700). The eighteenth century opens, as the seventeenth had closed, with an exuberance of criticism and mockery, where liberty of thought seems to be practised in a mood of self-satisfied display.

6. Universal Criticism; Arbuthnot, Swift.—Controversy begets controversy; it also produces scepticism. In the atmosphere of party strife and of the clashing of ideas, the average mind is drifting towards the lassitude, the jaded indifference which will mark the mid-years of the century. With vigorous thinkers, who give themselves up wholly to their beliefs, and ardently live through their intellectual adventures, doubt cannot be superficial, and light to bear; the universal irony with which they envelop themselves, and which seems to dissolve all the disappointments of heart or brain into a mere play of the critical intellect, disguises but ill the inward torment born of a moral restlessness. One must not, in all probability, lay too much stress on the moral kinship between Swift and the Romanticists, who were inclined to recognise in him one of themselves. But one can see in him, along with the triumph of the rational lucidity with which classicism wanted to light up the correct order of life and art, the symptom of the inner uneasiness which a Reason too well armed for destruction could not escape, while it only met on every side with rival negations.

Arbuthnot[2] is inseparable from Swift. He was his friend and lived in mental companionship with him; from the circle to which they both belonged there issued works united by an affinity of inspiration, and many a hint which others knew how to put to profit. A supple, alert, original, seed-sowing intelligence, he has influenced Swift to a greater degree than he has been influenced by him. Of less pronounced features, but not without a certain family resemblance, he deserves to be remembered by the side of his great friend.

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[1] Mary Pierrepont, born in 1689, had a studious youth, married in 1712 Edward Wortley Montagu, followed him to Constantinople, whither he was sent as Ambassador (1717), and from here she revealed Turkey to her friends. Separated from her husband, she resided in Italy from 1743 to 1761, and began a correspondence with her daughter, Lady Bute, like Mme. de Sévigné with Mme. de Grignan; died in 1762, leaving a copious diary, destroyed by her daughter; society verses (satires, eclogues, etc.). Her *Letters*, which she herself revised or made up with the help of the diary, were published in 1763. *Letters and Works*, ed. by Moy Thomas, 1861; Everyman Library, 1906. See Paston, *Lady M. W. Montague and Her Times*, 1907.

[2] John Arbuthnot, born in Scotland (1667), taught mathematics in London, then practised medicine; attached to the person of Queen Anne (1709), he played an important part under the Whig ministry (1710–14) and in 1712 wrote numerous pamphlets: *The Art of Political Lying, The History of John Bull*, etc. In 1713 he formed with

It is not easy to estimate the share of Arbuthnot in the common fund of ideas, images, symbols and pleasantry to which not only he and Swift, but also Pope, Gay and others contributed. His *John Bull* recalls in several places the *Tale of a Tub;* on the other hand, *Gulliver's Travels* owes its birth to *Martinus Scriblerus,* a general theme, no doubt of collective origin, but the most direct development of which seems to be due to Arbuthnot. As for the echoes and variations of this theme in the literature of the day, there still subsists about them a great deal of uncertainty.

One thing is clear, and that is the frame of mind to which these diverse works give expression. Keen and critical thinkers, instinct with the intellectual craving for realities, find themselves in contact with one another, mixed up with the politics of an age when all the devices of government are laid bare, when power is transferred to parties, when opinion, officially in the ascendant, is subjected to all the caprices aroused in it by secret manœuvring; when public life is the triumph of insincerity and fraud. Stimulated by the analysis of the deceit which social appearances serve to cloak, Arbuthnot, Swift, Pope and Gay encourage each other in the ironical searching after false intellectual values. Before their tribunal are summoned wretched poets, false savants, quack doctors, pretentious scholars, humanists puffed up with bookish learning. A sort of general revision of science and art is instituted; and this universal criticism, so bold that it dares assail the superstitious obsession of ancient literatures, takes up again the charges of *Hudibras* against an obstinate scholasticism that will not die.

Just as Butler's satire, so *Martinus Scriblerus* exaggerates the whims, the oddities, the wrongs of pedantic ignoramuses, overlooking the healthy soul of curiosity that is often to be found in them; above all, it obstinately attacks adversaries who have been conquered time after time, and it pursues them under their already obsolete forms rather than under the new forms with which they manage to invest themselves. In this excellent fancy, there is a somewhat forced air of caricature. But the claims of intellect against foolishness are affirmed with a clear, robust and sovereign good sense.

Arbuthnot has left his mark upon this common fund of doctrine. Through his *John Bull* also, his *Political Lying,* and the picture of his personality that we find in the works of his friends, he possesses a distinct literary physiognomy. He has the gift of humour, transposes into impassible observation a full and concrete sense of the innumerable absurdities of life; and his sober art, vigorous, often bitter and realistic, recalls the tonality of that of Swift. A doctor, he knows the intimate connections of body and soul, and looks at the caprices of character from a physical point of view; and yet, his vision of moral things is direct and profound; his portrait of John Bull has definitively drawn the first outline of this national English type. He has a creative imagination for allegory, and sustains the portraits of his symbolical characters with an accurate sense of the relationship between the sign and the thing signified. With him, experience and reflection have not soured the

Pope the Scriblerus Club, which produced the *Memoirs of Scriblerus* (published in 1741). After the death of the Queen and the fall of his party (1714), he retired into private life, but continued to collaborate in the literature of the Opposition, in a way that still remains obscure. He died in 1735. His *Miscellaneous Works* (1750) are only partly authentic. *The History of John Bull,* Cassell's Nat. Libr. See Aitken, *The Life and Works of Arbuthnot,* 1892.

power of feeling, but have matured it into a humane and tolerant philosophy, the kindly radiation of which was felt by all who came near him. His rationalism is refined into a humility of the intelligence. He is a writer through the firmness, the precision, the incisiveness of his style; and his artistic invention has been fruitful. The figure of Martinus Scriblerus, ridiculous, pitiable, and obscurely appealing, and the episodes of his childhood, are additions to the unforgettable types of human comedy; Sterne remembered them in *Tristram Shandy,* Carlyle in *Sartor Resartus.*

Swift[1] is the greatest writer of the classical age by the force of his genius; the concern for art and the care of form are not in his case the essential motive of creation. His work owes an exceptionally broad scope to the freedom and penetration of the thought. He carries the rational criticism of values to a point where it menaces and impairs the very reasons to live. In his case, therefore, lucidity and the search for balance are suffused with an intellectual emotion, concentrated and intense, which at times cannot be distinguished from an impassioned bitterness, and the expression of which, despite the restraint of irony and humour, possesses a pathetic vehemence. Attaining thus to the utmost limits of satire, he leaves the normal, simple plane of a literature of Reason; the stifled, repressed voices of sensibility and instinct, which reality in its baseness and cruelty afflicts with many wounds, supply the subdued accompaniment of soul-stirring chords to the clear accents of the intellect. And just as the language of Swift has this mixed tonality, so his thought outreaches the stage of pure criticism; it finds itself at work conserving, if not constructing; it clings to the relative and provisionary truths which can shelter the being of man. Beyond the spirit of classicism, of which he is the supreme mouthpiece, one perceives in Swift the latent powers of a virtual Romanticism; and further still, the audaciously humble solutions of the most modern wisdom.

It is permissible to think that these attenuations of the spirit of criticism, these voluntary sacrifices to good sense, are not the most original part of Swift's work. His practical adhesion to moral or social beliefs which his merciless perspicacity saw through and through is to all appearances a sinoes this mean anything?

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[1] Jonathan Swift, born in Dublin in 1667, came of a family of Yorkshire origin; lost his father at an early age, studied at Kilkenny and Trinity College, and was attached as secretary to Sir William Temple, until 1699. Already in 1696–7 he had written a great portion of *A Tale of a Tub,* and *The Battle of the Books,* published in 1704. It was at the home of Temple that he met Esther Johnson, the future Stella. He took orders, was appointed to the small living of Laracor in Ireland, but for the most part we find him in London, actively engaged in religious and political controversy. He defended the rights of the Irish clergy, and this led him to desert the Whig party for the other side, shortly before the Tory ministry of 1710. For a period of almost four years Swift, an intimate of Harley, was the influential adviser of the Government; collaborated in the *Examiner* (1711) and prepared public opinion for the peace with France (*The Conduct of the Allies,* etc.). Appointed Dean of St. Patrick's (Dublin) in 1713, he retired to Ireland on the fall of the Tories, whither he was followed by Hester Vanhomrigh (Vanessa), whom he had known in London; the false position of Swift between the two women who loved him, and of whom (it is possible, but improbable) he may have married one (Stella) was relieved by the death of Vanessa; that of Stella, in 1728, came as a still greater blow. He sympathised, meanwhile, with the sufferings of the Irish people, and wrote in their favour *The Drapier's Letters* (1724). *Gulliver's Travels,* which originated at a much earlier date, appeared in 1726, and had a great success, which, however, only brought greater suspicion upon the writer from a government annoyed by his satirical verve. His health, which had been failing for some time, grew worse; he was a victim of cerebral troubles and became more and more morose; after a few years of a life bordering on insanity, he died in 1745. *Prose Works,* ed. by T. Scott, 1897–1908; *Selections,* ed. by Craik, 1892–93; *Correspondence,* ed. by Ball, 1910, etc.; *A Tale of a Tub,* etc., ed. by Guthkelch and Smith, 1920; *The Battle of the Books,* ed. by Guthkelch, 1908; *Gulliver,* ed. by Aitken, 1896. See Prévost-Paradol, *Swift, sa vie et ses œuvres,* 1856; Craik, *Life of Swift,* 1882; Leslie Stephen, *Swift,* 1882; H. Cordelet, *Swift,* 1907; S. Smith, *Dean Swift,* 1910; *Vanessa and Her Correspondence with J. S.,* ed. by Freeman, 1921; Eddy, *Gulliver's Travels, a Critical Study,* 1923; E. Pons, *Swift, la Jeunesse, le Conte du Tonneau,* 1925.

cere act, and one which no logical need can lead us not to respect. But he has not explained the submission of his reason on principle; the lesson of his intellectual destiny is uncertain; his example, deprived of all contagious virtue, remains strictly individual and less fruitful. His life, with the shadow which overcasts it, and keeps gradually thickening, is in spite of all more significant than the wholly superficial tranquillity of his mind. The moral figure of Swift is that of an eager demand for truth that destroys one by one all deceitful illusions, and of the suffering which accompanies that destruction. This demand has been carried far in all directions; further, it would seem, than it itself desired to go; further, perhaps, than it was aware of at times.

As a Church dignitary, mixed up in the controversies which separated the Anglicans from the Dissenting sects, and within Anglicanism itself set several tendencies at variance with each other, Swift had to take a side. His career was a choice; he lived and died as Dean of St. Patrick's in Dublin. He wrote numerous religious treatises, which one is usually too much inclined to overlook, besides sermons of a dogmatic, sensible and calm tone; he acquitted himself scrupulously of the duties of his charge, and practised his religion, with more hidden regularity than apparent zeal. He recommends a judicious form of piety; extremes repel him, and his preferences lie in the observance of a golden mean; to follow the religion of the majority of one's compatriots, just as to obey the political constitution of one's country, is in Swift's opinion to act as a well-behaved man. He rails against the arguments of the Catholics, the strife and the fanaticism of the various sects; his nature leads him to embrace a doctrine of average reason. But he rebels with all his energy against the ambitious and rational attempt of Deism; he harshly refutes Collins. And in his reaction against the looseness in manners, he goes to the extent of extolling, not without a suspicion of irony, the benefits accruing from a purely exterior and social submission to the attitude of belief, for hypocrisy is, after all, better than cynicism.

This is only a reckless taunt. Despite the "conformism" of his declarations and principles, analogous to that of a Voltaire, Swift stirred up a deep and secret unrest in the minds of those in power during his time, the patrons of Church and State; Queen Anne, above all a devout Churchwoman, refused to recognise his political services in a fitting way; the favourite of a Minister, he did not obtain the Bishopric he believed he could expect; at the critical moments in his life, an unkind Destiny always seemed to baffle his desires; it is with the bitterness of a long series of disappointments that he withdrew from court intrigues. His great works, those in which his genius is laid bare, terrified or scandalised all orthodoxies; in the *A Tale of a Tub,* his religious thought is all instinct with a movement of pitiless negation; and the impulse which carries it on is too strong not to overthrow all the barriers which he himself would like to set up. In the preface which he wrote for this work, Swift is indignant that he should be classed among the Deists by superficial readers. To us of to-day, the error appears very natural. To point out shades and degrees of difference between the sects who contest each other's rights to represent the pure teaching of the Gospel, is to make it possible to select that which is least removed, on an average, from the sacred text; but such a choice is only a makeshift of resignation, the solution of despair; for too startling allegories picture to our eyes the unconscious or intentional work of human instinct, in all ages and in all the churches, bent on deforming, twisting, mutilating, contradicting the letter and the spirit of the admirable and terrible message, beneath which the flesh of man groans and faints.

And not only are all religious organisations built up on half-conscious acts of cowardice, and the surrender of the highest aspirations of faith; but the very ardour which exalts the most enthusiastic of believers—the Quakers, the Ranters, and those Huguenots, refugees from France, who at this time are making a public show of their convulsions—is bound up with the turbid fermentations of animality. The *Discourse Concerning the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit* no doubt admits, in passing, that prophetic inspiration can be an immediate gift from the Godhead; but everything encourages the conjecture that this is a purely formal reserve; for an over-zealous spirit in religion, from the orgies of the ancients to the frenzies of the moderns, is traced back with too mercilessly sharp an analysis, too keen an intuition of the deeper link between certain spiritual raptures and erotic moods, to the appetites alone of the flesh. The spirit of this treatise, in its manner of concentrated irony, is that of a modern study of the pathology of mystic states. And with the taste for sound, even if bitter truth, there is mingled in it the keen and secret joy of a moral revenge, the protest of a free mind against conventional lies, should even these lies be sacred.

But the works of Reason are treated with no better respect. *The Battle of the Books* is fired by an anger still aimed at a special object—at certain forms of intellectual ambition and error. Pedanticism, false erudition, rabid controversy, are connected with the thesis of the "Moderns," the insolent, mean enemies of the glory of the Ancients; the despiser of Phalaris, Bentley,—who yet was not wrong—is overwhelmed with classical contumely; the verve of this pamphlet, full as it is of allusions to the images and devices of the epic, is another example of the fecundity at this epoch of the mock-heroic theme. *Gulliver's Travels* singularly broadens the indictment of the very effort, by which the human mind claims to know and to understand. Philosophy appears in the light of an ambitious jargon; metaphysics, of a mystification; while theory, that sterile activity, shackles the efficient play of practice in all domains and in a hundred and one different ways. This satiric realism is given free scope in the painting of the illusory kingdom of Laputa. The fever of financial speculation, of rational enquiry and, already, of mechanical progress, which the society of that day freely shows, is presented as the agitated ardour of over-heated brains, in which are unceasingly hatched all manner of "projects" and inventions, preposterous chimeras.

Swift does not seem to lay any trust in science, either in its present or in its future; he derides equally the erudite inferences of Bentley, and Newton's theory of gravitation; these hypotheses, he holds, are the playthings of thought; fashion upholds them, and then they pass away. Like Samuel Butler, he joylessly witnesses, in the first flush of the modern age, the awaking of the mental unrest, which will produce the scientific conquest of the world; his attention, turned towards the past, is above all aware of the innumerable failures of scholastic charlatanry. The Moderns, according to him, have added nothing which really matters to the sound reasoning of the Ancients. His rational criticism of knowledge has no positive counterpart; it tends to scepticism.

It is less surprising to find only shadows in the image which Swift paints of political institutions and manners. His experience had revealed to him the hidden springs of power, the part played by corruption and intrigue. He writes in the Opposition, under the despised administration of Walpole. Elsewhere, in his didactic treatises, he shows himself alive to the necessity for a strong authority, sustained by the prestige of religion, and in its turn sustaining the spiritual hierarchy. While he has nothing about him of an uncompromising Tory, he is a friend of order. But *Gulliver's Travels* throws the light of a superior and destructive irony upon the smallness of the means, the vanity of the motives, the illusion of the catchwords, through which kings retain their thrones and magistrates their offices; and from one end of society to the other, the fearful influence of man upon man is exercised. It is not only the English political life of his time which he thus dissects; the monarchy itself, the paraphernalia that surround it, the courts and courtiers, the debating assemblies, the struggles of parties, the wiles of the favourites of both sexes—everything upon which, in fact, rests the contemporary administration of Europe—is irremediably damaged by this corrosive satire. To serve the needs of his allegory, and in order to vary the perspective by reversing the scale of his transposition, Swift carries us from the country of the dwarfs to that of the giants; in the former, everything was the grotesque and despicable parody of that human reality which convention invests with an august prestige; in the latter, it is our reality which reveals itself, directly, as ridiculous and infinitely small. But Brobdingnag and its patriarchal manners are not an ideal seriously proposed to man; this fancy vanishes as soon as one grasps its thin texture; it is only invented to show us better our littleness, to crush us under a sense of our miseries. Whatever the mean chosen for the comparison, mankind cuts a sorry and ugly figure.

The reason is that it is in itself vile and corrupt. In order to realise ever so little the idea of a noble existence, Swift has it that one must forsake the human species. Animal life will supply us with the figures of reasonable beings. In the land of the philosophical horses, we at last come upon something that in the countries known to us we have looked for in vain. When explained to these wise quadrupeds, our civilisation is not intelligible to them; for our perversity surpasses all understanding. And in the lower depths of their civilised society, the ignoble race of the two-footed monsters drags itself along; let us look at it without prejudice, and we shall recognise ourselves. What we call bestiality is the very attribute of man. With relentless cruelty, Swift drives our thought back towards the sordidness of physical existence. Here is an instinctive trend of his attention, almost an obsession of his fancy, of which his poems, like his great allegories, bear the traces, and which has been often connected with the morbid tendencies of his nature. No element in his work is more characteristic; none is better known, this delight in what is foul spreading itself out with cynical frankness on the very surface. In what measure have we here the sign and the germ of a pathological state? Or is it the need for the whole truth, a realism of mind, an ironic lesson of the moralist aimed at the vanities of mankind, a psychological and medical attention to what links up soul and body, or again the lucid, voluntary pessimism of a mind that is resolutely and coolly Christian? Nothing is more difficult than to attempt an exact answer to these questions.

On the other hand, there is among these elements one which dominates too much the others, which emanates too distinctly from all this work like a bitter essence, not to rightly serve to define it: pessimism. Swift does not pass judgment upon the universe or upon the world of man in the absolutely negative way which makes philosophic pessimism; his mind mistrusts general affirmations, and at the same time his status as a priest does not permit him, with regard to creation as a whole, to pronounce one of those explicit words of despair which faith reproves. Yet he is intellectually hostile to what exists; and his emotions have a much larger share in his judgments when he condemns than when he accepts reality. His verdict on life is of the psychological and moral order. It bears upon the quality of men in themselves, and upon the use they make of the occasions to act which society offers.

It is in the souls that the evil lies; thence it is that it radiates over all the relations of human beings with one another. This pessimism is so clearly coloured by individual experience, that one has been able to see in it the generalised after-effect of the shocks felt by the sensibility, or more precisely by the ambition of Swift; it is so personal in its expression, that one is tempted to find in it the painful consciousness of an impaired physical and mental health, the echo of inner sufferings which have ended by ruining the balance of a mind. Perhaps there is even at bottom the hidden influence of one of those secret sores of personality, the possible effects of which are revealed to-day by the study of subconscious states.

And yet, Swift has not been always the prey of this bitterness; at least, not to the same degree. His intimate life, and his literary life, both betray moments, or phases, of animation, of expansiveness, almost of gaiety. It is when he comes out of himself, out of his concentrated and solitary meditation, that his thought appears to relax. At the time in which he is wholly engrossed in political strife, from 1710 to 1714, Swift is carried onward by the tide of action. The *Journal to Stella,* a collection of letters in which he jots down familiarly the story of his life for the girl to whom he is attached by an affection that has remained rather mysterious, is one of the most taking documents of its kind; an effusion in which one catches the note of a strange temperament, somewhat ailing; but a note full of playfulness and tender puerilities. Whether it be the bustle of public affairs, or sentiment, which then occupies Swift more, something is lifting him above that fund of aggressive reflection, to which the *A Tale of a Tub* already bore witness.

Ireland also saved him at moments from this gnawing disquietude of mind. Deeply moved by the miserable lot of the country which saw his birth, which he does not look upon as his own, and for which he evinces a somewhat scornful sympathy, he at least knows how to speak out in its favour. He advises the Irish (1720) to reply to the economic pressure of the English by refusing to buy the products of their manufacture. In 1724, he publishes a series of *Letters* (signed "M. B., Drapier"), against the new copper currency which an Englishman had obtained the privilege to strike out, and the weight of which did not correspond with its official value. With an admirable divination of the popular mind, he there wrote a language full of such simple and just sense, and roused so cleverly the mistrust of the practical instinct, that the Government had perforce to yield before a general protest. On this occasion, Swift was the accepted mouthpiece of a people; and he always remained proud of it.

In many subjects, his fertile talent as a polemist was able to expose with clearness and coolness the ideas of a lively and original but balanced judgment. There is in Swift a literary critic, a political writer, a theorist of the rights of the Church. But his work has a physiognomy as a whole; and it is right that its dominant traits should be furnished by the most marked characteristics of his genius. He is above all great by his allegorical invention as applied to satire, by his humour and irony, by the marvellous ease and precision of his style.

Irony and allegory are here fused into one. What is unique, is the suggestive power which radiates from the play of symbolical imagination; and more than in the symbols themselves, more than in the forms chosen to illustrate the theses, the interest here lies in the discovery of these forms, in the act of the mind which chooses them, which loads them with a meaning prodigiously rich and insulting. The apologues on which are founded the *A Tale of a Tub* or *The Battle of the Books* have nothing original about them; *Gulliver's Travels* is first of all a novel of adventure and a tale of wonder, and as such is of no more value than many others; the sources utilised by Swift have been discovered or are suspected; in this domain he had a long series of predecessors. But the working out of those data is with him incomparable. The verve, the ingenuity, the concrete invention, which embroider these general themes with uninterrupted variations, give to the least detail a restrained and irresistible eloquence, and store it with a world of allusions; which also render the supernatural acceptable and normal: such are the elements of an art which Swift carries to the highest degree. And these elements themselves are derived; their common source is a passionate analysis which, with an indefatigable effort, scrutinises reality, at the same time as it judges and condemns it with a harsh and angry feeling. The figured representations among which Swift's satire moves are like an embittered poetry, the value of which lies less in its form, than in the philosophic meaning through which it develops and achieves itself.

An art of implicit expression, contained as to its methods, expansive as to its results, is by its main device closely akin to humour. It has usually been the preference to treat Swift as a master of irony, because his mockery has not the kindly after-taste which would appear to be, according to some judges, the distinctive note of the humorist. But while his effects are very often more in the nature of irony—which depicts the ideal, and pretends to believe that it is real—they are also very often enlivened by humour—which depicts the real, and pretends to believe that it is ideal. The working of transposition, which is common to them, brings these two literary kinds very close together, and their boundaries are shifting. Swift likes to hover playfully over these limits, and to pass from one domain to the other. He is no less a master in one than in the other. He handles humour in a superior manner because, being keenly alive to all the virtual value of the concrete, to all the reactions which the real sets up in our emotion or in our intelligence, he knows how to evoke it with its crude force, to allow these reactions their widest play, and to efface himself entirely behind the facts he presents to us, enhancing their eloquence with his impassibility. The best known piece—the practical, commercial proposition to turn to use the flesh of Irish children as butcher's meat—has all the precision of an estimate and the calm of a financial statement.

Thus it is that Swift's style conveys the impression of a tense energy, but one which commands and directs itself. A morbid element may have been found in his thought; his personality is a problem which has not as yet, perhaps, revealed the whole of its secret; it certainly contains both grief and instability, a deep trouble which finally led to madness. But this anguish and this unrest are dominated by the force of an extraordinarily lucid intellect, of a will that knows how to govern passion even when it delivers itself up to it. Upon a temperament that possessed all the germs of moral incertitude, and which no doubt, in the following century, would have blossomed out into an ardent Romanticism, Swift builds up a work that is wholly classical in its form. The inner tension reveals itself only in the compactness of the expression, in the number of the intentions, in the restrained violence of some effects. Everything is clear in this style, despite the use made of allusion; it is bathed in an intellectual light; everything in it seems sound, normal, self-controlled. It is only in some familiar effusions, such as the *Journal to Stella*, that we meet with the signs of an oddity in the manner of writing and in the terms which is excessive, at times disquieting.

Everywhere else, the language is that of Reason itself, of a Reason that is sensible to reality, nurtured by it, and in no way abstract and dry. Swift possesses the concrete world, knows how to utilise it, and here again he is the humorist. He knows how to employ the racy word, sometimes the coarse word; he frankly collides with the proprieties, or as the case may be, veils the realism of his subjects with ironic periphrases. But the concrete facts of experience, as well as the ideas, the sentiments and the shades of meaning, are wrapped up, harmonised by the limpid flow of the most simple, vigorous and straightforward prose. Each word is in its place, quite naturally; the most fitting word is always chosen, without effort, through an instinct that seems spontaneous. A great variety of tone is obtained by means of a supple adaptation of the language to the theme. If one remembers the extent of Swift's work, the ease with which it passes from the most naïve exposition to the pseudo-epic style, from the weightiest discussion to the freest pleasantry, the fact that the parts of his correspondence which were the most hastily dashed off are still astonishingly spirited and immediately, inevitably clear, one will the better gauge the greatness of the writer.

To be consulted: *Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. ix. chaps. iv. v. viii. ix. xi. viii.; vol. x. chap. xv.; Bergson, *Le Rire*, etc., 1900; Elton, *The Augustan Ages*, 1899; Farrar, *Critical History of Free Thought*, 1862; Hunt, *Religious Thought in England*, 1892; Laski, *Political Thought in England from Locke to Bentham*, 1921; Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*, 1812–15; Paston, *Lady M. W. Montagu and Her Times*, 1907; De Rémusat, *Angleterre au XVIIIe siècle*, 1856; Rigault, *Histoire de la Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*, 1859; Robertson, *Short History of Free Thought*, 1906; Saintsbury, *History of Criticism*, 1902; Sichel, *Bolingbroke and His Times*, 1902; Leslie Stephen, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, 1902.

CHAPTER IV

THE LITERATURE OF THE MIDDLE CLASSES

1. The Middle Classes and the National Temperament.—In point of time, De Foe, Steele and Addison belong to the very first years of the classical period; it might seem natural to begin the study of it with them. The moral and social tendencies which they represent enter into the very constitution of classicism. But if they are part and parcel of the present, still more do they announce the future. The movement of which they are the heralds appears to adapt itself quite peacefully to the existing frame of literature and society; in fact, it extends beyond this frame, and prepares a vast development which will go on broadening out through the second half of the century. Much more solidly than with Pope and Swift, indeed, De Foe, Addison and Steele are psychologically connected with Richardson, in line with whom they already find themselves; and after Richardson, middle-class literature, of which they mark the advent, will gradually become one of the indirect causes of Romanticism. It is therefore more suitable to place the study of these writers after that of the real leaders of classicism, and in closer union with the signs of moral dissidence which their epoch reveals upon analysis, and which are the origin of another revolution in literature.

If the classical age is of a relatively less pure quality than was that of the Restoration, it is because the social components of the dominant tone are no longer simple. The ruling class is now mixed. It is still built, so to say, upon an aristocratic frame; the prestige of birth is not abolished; high positions and posts are primarily reserved for the ancient families; the Court remains crowded with nobles claiming the royal favour. The most refined elements of society, those whose culture is the oldest, continue to be the leaders of fashion and taste. The classical turn of mind, the demand for clear order and a chosen form, the ideal of a studied correctness, are still associated with the culture of elegant sets, whose manners and ideas have received, during the preceding century, the superficial stamp of French civilisation, and who, through their spontaneous instincts, have found themselves the natural representatives of the swing towards intelligence in the moral rhythm. But since 1688, the upper middle class is more and more commingling with the hereditary nobility, or rising to a position by its side in the state; and without openly demanding the division of power, it is making its individual influence felt. The middle class as a whole—in the sense in which it stretches down to the common people—is not without sharing in this progress. The centre of social gravity tends to shift in the direction of some human elements, whose formation, modern and urban as it is, may receive, for want of a more exact term, the name of "bourgeois." Thus a compromise is established, in which the influences of the middle order of the State are every day becoming more active.

The wealthy merchants, the financiers, of Puritan stock, retain something of their former characteristics. They become more cultured, acquire polish, put up with or accept the tone of the superior class, and under the stimulus of social ambition, try to mix with them, as far as this is possible. But they do not think, do not feel in common with them. Their presence even in the most influential circles diffuses a different magnetism throughout the whole of society, encouraging a fondness for piety, simplicity and sentimental moralism, that for two generations had been repressed by an imperious social and moral reaction. It is in this way that new elements, of a middle-class nature, enter into the psychological and literary atmosphere of the classical age; they bring with them a need for balance and measure, and so seem to lend themselves without effort to the full realisation of its standard; but at the same time they lay germs of difference and disintegration, which will develop with time.

What reappears in this way, within a classicism in which the English instinct does not absolutely recognise itself, is a groundwork of tendencies perhaps more characteristic, and more national. Among the phases of the rhythm through which the genius of a people passes, there is one which seems to correspond better with the most original elements of its nature. It is that which from then onwards in England begins to revive, and its slow return will fill the eighteenth century. It cannot be said, of course, that Pope as a writer is foreign to his own country. The art of which he is the chief master has been accepted, sought for, demanded by a whole order of civilisation, which is, in the progressive development of his race, a logical and fully normal moment. But with the humble writings of his contemporary De Foe, with the brilliant essays of Steele and Addison, men of letters like himself, associated by the public with his reign and with his glory as a literary law-giver, it is something contrary, something more truly national which begins again. Certain desires, certain elementary needs of the soul, are more directly satisfied through them. And the new artistic change which from now is preparing will owe to these desires and to these needs the forces which will assure its triumph. Henceforth, England will gradually and dimly tend to reconstruct the unity of its conscious self round the sentimental, sensitive and moral suggestions which come to it from these men, middle-class or mediocre by birth, with whom deep spiritual inclinations have suffered less change than with their predecessors through an artificial and acquired culture.

2. De Foe.—One would be tempted, at first acquaintance with De Foe,[1] to see in him an average man, drawing his strength from the eminent degree in which he represents the mentality of a class. No writer is so definitely, in the domain of literature, the mouthpiece of the commercial middle-class of his day. But the slightest reflection shows up the exceptional character of his personality. Enrolled through his instincts in this social category, which he never ceased to serve despite his changeful life and political adventures, he nevertheless rises above it by virtue of the superiority of a prodigious creative vigour.

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[1] The life of Daniel De Foe, which is still rather imperfectly known, was so full of varied activities, and of an enormous literary output, that it is impossible to bring it within the limits of a short summary; it is not possible either, to sum up his work in a few lines. Born in London about 1660, of lower middle-class, Presbyterian family, he received a simple education, travelled on the Continent, took up commerce, became a bankrupt, was an indefatigable writer on all subjects; at first served the Whig cause and the Non-Conformists, then the Tory cause, as political agent of the minister, Harley; after 1714, he secretly betrayed the Tories to the profit of the Whig Government; meanwhile, he had been subjected to the pillory (1703), and imprisoned on several occasions. He died in 1731, leaving behind several hundred authentic writings and many whose authorship is doubtful. Special mention can be made of the following: in poetry: *The True-Born Englishman*, 1701; in journalism: *The Review*, 1704–13; in political writing: *The Original Power of the Collective Body of the People of England*, 1701; among pamphlets: *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*, 1702; *The Secret History of the White-Staff*, 1714–15; among general writings: *A True Relation of the Apparition of One Mrs. Veal*, etc., 1706; *A Journal of the Plague Year*, 1722; in history: *The History of the Union of Great Britain*, 1709; in economy: *Considerations of Public Credit*, 1724; in travels: *A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, 1724–6; among didactic works: *Religious Courtship*, 1722; *The Complete English Tradesman*, 1725–7; *The Complete English Gentleman* (published in 1890); in the field of the novel: *Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, 1719; *Captain Singleton*, 1720; *Moll Flanders*, 1722; *Colonel Jacque*, 1722; *Lady Roxana*, 1724; etc. There is no complete edition of his works; for the novels and other tales, see that of Aitken, 1895–6. See the biographies and studies by Lee, *Life and Newly Discovered Writings of De Foe*, 1869; Minto (English Men of Letters), 1879; the chapter on De Foe in the *Cambridge*

And yet, the initial impression was not wrong. Of a very marked individuality, and outstanding as he is through the many-sided nature of his talent, De Foe is not as original as he is robust. Leaving aside the immensity of his work, it is possible to study it so as to recognise in it the characteristic traits of the Puritan shopkeepers and tradesmen, who were then profiting from the influence acquired by the big merchants and financiers. Despite his keen desire to rise in the world, he is more noticeably a commoner than either Addison or Steele; he never received a University education; his intellectual outlook is wholly modern, and preserves in contact with reality that freshness of perception, that spontaneous way of looking at things, which one connects with minds of a practical bent. The new and rather hard light which has been thrown upon De Foe by the discoveries relative to his part of secret agent and paid informer, does not detract from his physiognomy that quality of full agreement with the figure of a class; the moral severity of the religious dissenters did not exclude, as a matter of fact, the most supple adaptations to the demands of utility, nor even on occasion all human failings.

Indeed, his works of so diverse a nature can be grouped round a few themes or tendencies. In the discussion of moral and social matters, De Foe for the first time lets us hear the actual voice of the average middle class. He expresses its wishes, the idea it has of itself and of its place in the State; its desire for hierarchy and a just subordination, but also for liberty. *The Complete English Tradesman* destroys, without appearing to do so, the literary privilege which the Restoration had accorded to the circles of the aristocracy; henceforth, the interest of the reading public—however humble and tempered with humour the development may be—can now be granted to subjects inseparably bound up with trade. *The Complete English Gentleman* gives definite utterance to the essential claim of the tradesman: to attain to culture, and through it to integrate himself in the ruling classes; to sweep away the barrier of refinement, the only one that still bars his progress. This is not to say that De Foe dissociates the envied title of "gentleman" from all material standing; one must have wealth, he holds, when birth is lacking, that one may pretend to it; neither does he demand it for the merchants themselves, in the first generation: their sons and grandsons, when duly educated, will no longer be distinguishable from the descendants of ancient families. De Foe therefore justifies, in principle, what was tending to become a normal reality; the spirit of equality behind his thought is very prudently kept in check. And yet, facts are stronger than all scruples; he has to note the moral corruption of the nobility, and the decline of the ignorant and brutal country gentleman. The future—implicitly—lies with the class that toils, grows rich, and will give itself the prestige of knowledge, if it is cognisant of its genuine interest.

This class is in contact with reality, has a hold over it, and draws therefrom its vigour. Intellectually it is brought up to respect the concrete; its instinct is a whetted desire to seek out the useful. It is unwittingly empirical; if it takes consciousness of what it is doing, and formulates it, then it is rationalistic, without any undue care for system; it inclines to scientific objectivity, as to an end that is rarely reached. De Foe is the most wonderful observer of facts; by means of his imagination he can associate them anew; but he also

History of English Literature, vol. ix.; Bernbaum, *The Mary Carleton Narratives*, 1914; Trent, *De Foe and How to Know Him*, 1916; Nicholson, *The Historical Sources of De Foe's Journal of the Plague Year*, 1920; P. Dottin, *Daniel de Foe et ses romans*, 1924.

knows how to subject himself to them, absorb them, reproduce them with a faithfulness that is not entirely passive, for pure passivity would give the impression of the discontinuous; but with that minimum of organisation, of intuitive coherence, which can be learned only from a deep sense of life itself.

It is through this faculty of elementary reconstruction, a half-way stage on the road to invention properly speaking, that one is inclined to explain to-day the tales which De Foe has borrowed from reality, and by a very discreet art has clothed in an atmosphere of verisimilitude, but which after all are no less true. *The Apparition of One Mrs. Veal* is the veracious account of a supposed phantom; *The Storm* describes the real effects of a tempest; *A Journal of the Plague Year* works up authentic testimonies upon the pestilence which visited London. Realism for De Foe is the natural instrument of literature; his novels, in their most imaginative episodes, owe to it their extraordinary solidity of contour; but the whole of his work is full of the rich substance of concrete things. He was daring enough to see the advantages of a modern education, and to claim it for others than the sons of the people; he has grasped the facts of social life, and has described economic reactions; his *Tour through Great Britain* shows an observant, discriminating traveller; his *Augustus Triumphans* is full of the most ingenious suggestions as to the development of societies. For his empiricism advances even to the state of reflective knowledge, and the perception of hidden relations; De Foe not only observes, he analyses, infers, invents.

At the same time, and after the manner of his class, he moralises. The psychological conditions of individual and social well-being, the sentiments and acts which secure balance and success, these to him are privileged facts, essential among all others; not to recall and show them, would be to want in the first duty of a utilitarianism so spontaneous and inevitable, that it cannot be distinguished from good sense. Throughout his long career, and even when his surreptitious doings were not edifying, De Foe's constant desire has been to edify. Numerous among his writings are treatises on practical ethics; and in all are instances of his wish to instruct and to warn. *Robinson Crusoe* would be misunderstood, if one did not see in it above all a demonstration of the part played by Providence in life. *Captain Singleton* is, or claims to be, the account of a conversion. *Religious Courtship* ,is the handbook of unexceptionable married pairs. Piety tends to become emotional, and a certain sentimentality is in keeping with the tone of souls, as prescribed by the hygiene of experience. De Foe, to be sure, does not overdo pathos; his objectivity in most cases is not without some dryness. The exploits of his buccaneers are narrated with strange impassivity. But when the great themes of life, death, and salvation are evoked, an austere, sober emotion gives dignity to the story. The human drama, in *Robinson Crusoe,* appeals to us; there is here an indissoluble fusion of what is earthly and what is divine.

By these features he is one of a class; by others he is himself. His personality is elusive, and it is with difficulty that one can unite all the expressions of it; there still subsists in it some obscurity. The subconscious victories of utilitarianism over principle do not suffice to explain the broken line of his existence, his changes of opinion, his secret activities; nor do his momentary difficulties justify his superhuman fertility of production. It seems as if Nature, in this exemplar of the middle-class search for balance, had deposited some measure of unsettled psychological disposition, along with that incalculable impulse, the itch and the talent of writing. His political and business life was one of adventure. De Foe, the writer, has not only a matter-of-fact eloquence, ingenuity, and perspicacity; he has not only humour, which implies some self-restraint, a certain dividing, so to say, of the soul; he is at times carried away further than it would be prudent to go by a force of ironical argument equal to that of Swift. *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters* is a masterpiece of merciless analysis; here the obscure reactions of dogmatism and intolerance are viewed in so hard a light as to reveal henceforth, and to deprive of the benefit of darkness, the plans for violent repression which the high Anglican Church still fostered, without daring to realise them, or being able to cancel them, without even consenting to confess them to itself. To tear away such a veil is a dangerous deed, and De Foe learned so to his cost. In other circumstances, he abandoned the simple attitude demanded by the solidarity of his class; in the closing years of his life, all parties distrusted him. . . .

This irregular fate is that of an exceptional being. He is great neither by his abstract reasoning, nor by any high artistic conscience; but he has, in addition to the common faculties of the social circle whence he comes, which he possesses in a superior degree, a gift of personal expression, a creative imagination. The poet, in De Foe, is not to be overlooked. He belongs to the classical age, in this sense that his lines are thought out and created in the tone of ordinary reflection, raised only by a slightly greater tension of the idea, a more compact form, a more regular rhythm. But he knew how to extract powerful effects from this controversial branch of literature. *The True-born Englishman* is a satire full of flavour, where racial and family pride is most severely derided; in it the heroic couplet is handled by a plebeian rhymester who is not above using doggerel on occasion, but who has read his Dryden, and is not unworthy of the comparison at times. A free and vigorous inspiration, in which the desire for correctness makes itself felt but without being either efficacious or tyrannical, produces here, so to say, a popular classicism.

The novels of adventure which follow one another in close succession and within the space of a few years (1719-24), constitute De Foe's main claim to the quality of a universal writer which time has given him and left him. *Robinson Crusoe* is "classical" in another sense than the poetry of Pope. In these stories we have a triumph of the imagination; but it is still supported by facts; the shipwreck of Selkirk is at the source of *Robinson Crusoe; Captain Singleton* and *Moll Flanders* have as a real background accounts of travels, the vague but suggestive geography of the time, the memoirs and biographies of loose women and criminals. De Foe applies instinctively the documentary method; his greedy curiosity is for ever assimilating, and he allows his various memories to live, organise themselves, and grow according to their own powers. Of some of his novels it has been possible to wonder whether they might not be historical works, as the *Memoirs of a Cavalier;* the *Journal of the Plague Year,* compiled from texts, has been looked upon as purely a novel.

However "real," and derived from experience, the materials of a work may be, a moment comes when they have to be subjected to the law of a new construction. Invention, with De Foe, is remarkable for the extreme resemblance of its products with the actual combinations of things. His imagination works in the direction of reality because he is full of it, and has assimilated its deeper habits, its laws, and so to speak its obscure will; on the other hand, the pictures he draws have all the solid relief of facts, because his look always absorbs the qualities of what he sees, so that his mere visions naturally partake of the characters of his sensations. This force of mental realism destroys the very principle of realism; the visionary in De Foe only further develops the practical middle-class citizen.

In this way the startling truth of the largely imaginary adventures of a Robinson Crusoe has given successive generations the most concrete picture of the struggle of a man against Nature. Such a subject appealed to ancient and universal emotions, to perhaps the most specifically human interest that literature has to offer; without deliberately wishing to do so, but through his intuitive instinct of life, De Foe has written not only the instructive story of the perils which befall a frail humanity preserved by supernatural aid, but the symbolical drama of the painful, patient effort by which civilisation has come into being.

There is a writer in De Foe, since there is a vigorous mind that sees and knows how to picture up its visions by means of words. Without being an artist in the proper sense, he has also artistic merits. He is clear, as the activity of his mind is clear; his language is concrete, like his thought; but one feels that his handling of certain devices is too skilful not to be voluntary, and not to reveal the pleasure he himself finds in them. The racy flavour, the expressive power of his style, the humour which he imparts to it, are the gifts of a writer abounding in a still popular sap, conscious enough to be able to put this resource to its fullest use, and wise enough not to impair it by attempting effects of another kind.

3. Steele and Addison.—Addison and Steele are inseparable. Their temperaments offer more opposition than harmony; their respective works are in great part independent. But their names have been associated in a literary and moral undertaking too significant, too closely bound up with the social needs of the time, not to give a centre, as it were, to their literary careers. The *Spectator* is the supreme expression of middle-class literature in the plane of a fully accepted classicism; and Steele and Addison remain first and foremost the authors of the *Spectator*.

Steele[1] is not entirely, like Addison, a man of his time. By some traits of his figure, he recalls the care-free graces of the Restoration; by others, and probably the most characteristic, he announces the effusions, the display of self, the ethics of sensibility, which the eighteenth century will make fashionable. He is a classicist only by accident and opportunity. His thought is naturally clear; he possesses a certain faculty for composition, the gift of delicacy and fine shading; but the secret ideal he pursues is that of a pleasant negligence; his form is less laboured, less careful than it is spontaneous; the disciplined art of his best pages owes much to the example of Addison.

A fertile mind, a generous personality, attractive even in its weaknesses, Steele draws to himself sympathies that his friend of a colder and more conscious nature repels. His literary initiative has been sometimes honoured more than it deserves. Though in the creation of an original variety of essay he has played a decisive part, he alone, or even more especially he, cannot be credited with having brought it to the degree of perfection it attained. He has his charming felicities; but the art of Addison has a finished distinction, of a more even, more sober and more secure effect.

The Christian Hero is the most significant of confessions. Steele expresses therein without knowing it the deep-rooted demand which the middle classes laid down as a condition of their rallying to the doctrine of the classicists. Classicism to them is only acceptable if it is moral. To the pagan tradition therefore will have to be added the spirit of Christianity, as interpreted by the Puritan conscience. The wisdom of the Stoics, declares Steele, is not enough to live and die; the virtue of antiquity can retain its hold over the imagination, but the realities of conduct escape it; only the lessons of Christ can awaken in souls a spirituality capable of sustaining that courageous independence towards the world where true heroism is known. The needs of moral regularity, of idealism, of feeling—such are the tendencies which the middle classes bring to that transposed expression of the inner life out of which literature is made. To them it will often be only a convention, as Steele himself did not remain on the level of the precepts he laid down; but, henceforth, conscience will find a necessary tranquillity in the official sway of these rules, even when they are not strictly observed in practice. Through them the tone of social life will be gradually altered.

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[1] Richard Steele, born in Dublin, in 1672, of middle-class family (his father was an attorney), chose a military career, and led a care-free, dissipated life during his early years; about 1700 he began to take an interest in things morally serious, although his life did not reflect any great change; he published in 1701 an edifying treatise, *The Christian Hero,* then wrote sentimental comedies (see below, chap. v.); always pressed for money, he turned to periodical literature, and founded *The Tatler,* in which he had the frequent collaboration of Addison; the latter took a predominant share in the management of *The Spectator* (1st March, 1711, to 6th Dec., 1712). Steele next wrote numerous political pamphlets, launched several periodicals, among which *The Guardian* (1713), *The Englishman,* and *The Lover;* returned to the theatre, and died in 1729. *The Tatler,* ed. by Aitken, 1898–99; for *The Spectator,* see Addison; *Select Essays,* ed. by L. E. Steele, 1907; for the theatre, see chap. v. See biography by Aitken, 1889; study by Dobson (English Writers), 1888.

The *Tatler* is the individual work of Steele. It appeared thrice weekly, and preserved the features of periodicals given over to general information, such as the *Athenian Mercury* of Dunton, and the *Review* of De Foe.[1] Each number treats of several themes, and allots special headings to literary and political news. But Steele soon discovers the task to which his surest instinct inclines him: the reform of manners. He borrows from Swift the comic figure of Isaac Bickerstaff, astrologer and magician, a clever diviner of the private secrets of his fellow-beings; and in a series of imaginary portraits, which conceal real originals, he undertakes to bring to the notice of the public and of the guilty people themselves the errors of vanity, egoism, and extravagance which disturb the pleasant and decorous order of social intercourse. The work thus begun is somewhat analogous to that which the "salons" and circles of the "précieuses" had accomplished in France during the seventeenth century; it represents a victory of culture over the rough, uncouth excesses of too individualistic a civilisation. The crusade of the *Tatler* and the *Spectator* comes much later than that of the Hôtel de Rambouillet; it is instinct with a middle-class and not an aristocratic spirit; again, it does not tend above all towards the refinement of language and thought, but towards the purification of manners and human relations. It is none the less, at bottom, of a parallel intent, and equally constitutes an action of the intellectual élite upon the life of the cultured circles; it is an English, and so more moralising, counterpart of the same movement.

In England the coffee-houses replace the "salons." They play a part of the same order, in a relative sense. They offer to a class, the social influence of which tends to increase, the material means to come together, to define its tastes and to take stock of them. Here it is that public affairs, literary news, fashions, scandals, are discussed; an average opinion is created, and formulated; it is already, in certain essential elements, the middle-class opinion which will hold undisputed sway in the nineteenth century. As yet it is not bold enough to impose its own influence. It aims at a compromise between the aristocratic temper of moral freedom, which the Restoration had carried to a licentious excess, and the Puritan spirit, which the excesses of the Commonwealth had brought into disrepute. The task of Steele and Addison is to reconcile these opposite tendencies, to moralise refinement and refine morality. They are able, thanks to their personal distinction and delicate tact, to bring about a synthesis in which aristocratic culture keeps a place large enough to reassure the intellectual susceptibilities of the classical age. There is nothing here as yet of that Philistinism with which the English middle classes will be charged later, and not without some reason.

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[1] For the beginnings of the press and periodic publications in England in the seventeenth century, the part of L'Estrange, Dunton, etc., see an historical summary and a bibliography in the *Cambridge History of English Literature,* vol. vii. chap. xv.; vol. ix. chap. i.

Steele has the intuition of this synthesis, and sincerely works to realise it; but he seeks it chiefly by way of the sensibility. The doctrine he outlines in the *Tatler* is already, to some extent, that of Rousseau. In this paper he discovers the charm of tender sentiments, of family affections, of homely manners; to a generation withered by cynicism and the parade of libertinage, he reveals the pleasure that lies in experiencing the simple joys of the heart, the healthy sadness of regret and of memory; the novels of Richardson will show the development of these germs. He exalts conjugal love, and recalls his impressions of childhood; all the broad and deep vein of the literature of familiar emotion is thus reopened; and in this retrieved tone, modern and middle-class England feels the national note she has been looking for. Never since then has she allowed it to be lost.

In the texture of his work, Steele's art is more fecund and happier than it is infallible. His humour is of a quality prettily tender and persuasive; he has an instinctive sense of the devices by which the attention of the reader can be sustained and held fast; he imagines a meeting of odd characters, the "Trumpet Club," and gives to each of them that innocent whimsicality which lends to the figures an air of sympathetic truth; in this, Dickens will be his distant inheritor. He thus adumbrates many things, and already realises more than one. But he is wanting in care, in self-control; his appeal to the feelings is occasionally too facile, his ethics too pointed, while some developments, in their over-explicitness, offer but little interest. With all the merit of their spontaneity, these essays are of a rather loose pattern. The satire, the portraits remain a little sketchy and superficial. The personal work of Addison will be to strengthen and develop this matter, and to refine its form.

Addison[1] is eminently a classicist; he has very little resistance to overcome in his nature that he may live in harmony with the doctrine. His temperament and his life reflect a happy balance, undisturbed by any accidents or doubts. He owes this harmony to the fact that his artistic creed and his moral faith were from the beginning united in a perfect fusion. With him the middle-class mind assumes a distinction which makes it easily equal to the most studied aristocratic fastidiousness; and his religious leanings confirm, instead of contradicting, the wholly intellectual hierarchy of artistic values which classicism is setting up.

His beginnings are academic, and humanistic; he steeps himself thoroughly in the restrained elegance of the purest culture of antiquity; the past occupies him more than the present. If he travels in Italy, it is above all in order to note the memories of ancient Rome; landscapes or paintings have less appeal to him than inscriptions; he writes *Dialogues on the Usefulness of Old Medals*. Already, however, the commerce and finances of Genoa, the constitution of Venice, interest him; a mind of general scope and clear intelligence, but shrewd, and capable of concrete moral perception, he will readily busy himself with public affairs. His idealism is that of the middle classes: the sense of economic realities remains its very foundation.

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[1] Joseph Addison, born in 1672, the son of a parson, studied at Oxford, was a great reader of the classics, and wrote Latin verses; from 1699 to 1703 he travelled on the Continent, a journey of which he gave an account in *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy* (1705). A circumstantial poem (*The Campaign*) brought him fame in 1704; from then onwards his political career was speedy; member of Parliament (1708), he occupied several prominent posts and led, with his aristocratic friends, the dignified life of a man of letters. After an opera (*Rosamond*, 1707), he collaborated in *The Tatler*, then in *The Spectator* (1711–12); staged his tragedy, *Cato* (1713), which scored a tremendous success, and tried his skill in comedy (*The Drummer*, 1716). Having contracted a wealthy marriage in 1716, he became Secretary of State (1717) and died in 1719, leaving behind some writings of a religious character. His works were collected by Tickell in 1721. *Works*, ed. by Greene, 1856; *The Spectator*, ed. by Morley, 1888; ed. by G. Smith, 1897; ed. by Aitken, 1898; in Everyman's Library, 1907; *Essays on Milton*, ed. by Morley, 1886; *Miscellaneous Works*, ed. by Guthkelch, 1914–15. See the biography by Aiken, 1843; studies by Courthope (English Men of Letters, 1884); Elton, *The Augustan Ages*, 1899; Ashton, *Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne*, 1883.

The vocation of literature, meanwhile, is awaking in him; and poetry is then the best and speediest road to fame. So in the course of his travels he writes a letter in verse to his patron Lord Halifax; and as his tastes and affinities connect him with the fortunes of the Whig party, he agrees to serve its interests in a timely panegyric of Marlborough, *The Campaign*. These pieces reveal an estimable poet, a talent skilled enough to escape in a large measure the defects of his qualities; but the qualities of his defects are not vivid enough, to redeem the essential artifice of such inspirations. These are very creditable applications of the classical recipe, but without any serious originality. His opera, *Rosamond*, confirms him, through a signal failure, in an instinctive aversion for the vulgar devices of this inferior kind of writing, under the Italian form in which at this very moment it was conquering the English stage. His political career, however, develops under the most happy auspices. Then it is that the *Tatler* of Steele, his former schoolfellow, provides him with the means of expression he is looking for; and from the *Tatler* comes the *Spectator*.

The instrument might have meant little, but for the author's instinctive prevision, both of the laws governing it and of its possible effects; and this intuition testifies to a creative force in Addison, that is fed by his temperament and his experience. Like Steele, he has a desire, and feels the urgent need, for a reform in morals; he agrees with the deep-felt longing after a more decorous order of things, after a better regulated conduct, which is being evidenced since the manifesto of Collier; and while he does not, like Steele, reap the knowledge of human weakness from his own inward frailty, he has a natural leniency, a tolerant gentleness of soul, which temper a rather Puritanic severity of principle. It is greatly to Addison's credit that whereas he might have judged life above all from books, he showed himself an informed observer, a judicious critic of manners and characters. This he owes to a natural finesse, and a tact of thought; the habit of analysing, which his literary studies had developed, here finds itself directed, through a rare and felicitous harmony, towards the intelligence of souls; Addison fully realises the doctrine of classicism because he possesses a lucid and exact notion of the matter which is henceforth to be his: the humours, the moral shades of human beings living in company; within certain limits, but with precision and safety, he is a psychologist.

The *Spectator* has nothing about it of a periodical meant for information; it neglects the happenings of every day, save now and then, by an odd allusion; it gives itself up entirely—with the exception of the advertisements, the commercial tenor of which contrasts strangely at times with the contents themselves—to a daily essay on morality, literature, philosophy, serious or humorous reflection. Addison and Steele, aided by a few occasional collaborators, keep up this effort of speedy composition and renewal of subject-matter for more than twenty-one months; they relieve it through little devices, such as the insertion of real or fictitious letters, the insistence on some themes, or on series of connected subjects which maintain and carry on the interest; and though the didactic tone ends by becoming dangerously pronounced, the collection as a whole forms the most charming, the most varied, and the least sermonizing of the commentaries upon social life as it is, and as it should be.

At the centre of this life, and of its most active focus, the capital, stands a supposed spectator; at work with observant eyes, carefully noting the very details, and the external aspects, of the comedy of human relations; with a mind that studies, penetrates, interprets, thoughts and hearts alike; with a moral sensibility, supple and delicate, that reacts according to the wishes of conscience. This imaginary judge is a composite figure, to which the personality of Addison contributes most of its traits; and when once the bond of sympathy is established between him and his public, he comes to play a part of increasing importance, thanks to a repeated, daily action, in the intimate life of an élite. This part of director and lay adviser demands, in order to be happily sustained, an extreme pliancy, an intellectual authority, a natural gift of seduction. It is because they were able to display these merits that the authors of the *Spectator* have exercised a moral influence which counts in the history of English culture.

Their method is that of shrewd preachers who do no violence to human nature, and who employ against it the weapons that it itself supplies: The fear of opinion is what prompts many acts, and it is just this that Addison and Steele bring into play; they make vice, all excessive affectation, and the hundred and one superficial forms of egoism, equally ridiculous. At bottom, the ideal they teach is that of the repression of self-love; in it the best essence of stoicism is mixed up with the principles of Christianity; and as this virtue is adorned with the elegance of mind and manners, it can be said that the notion of the "gentleman" is thus defined, for a long period of time, in its modern and more widely liberal acceptation. But to consider the detail of the work, the *Spectator* acts through the fear of losing social approbation, and appeals, with readers engaged in worldly cares, to still interested motives. The art of living together, the duties of family life, the rules of true gallantry, the status and part of women in society, the laws governing the toilet, amusements and reading, such are the subjects touched upon by this universal adviser, who passes from the most serious matters to the slightest; and conducts a crusade against duelling in the midst of jokes aimed at extravagant head-dresses.

Such studies in manners almost of necessity tend to find a definite support in a series of individual sketches; of these again, some will stand out from the others, and acquire a superior consistency. It has been possible to say that the *Spectator* shows a premonition of the fortune that was soon to accrue to the novel of moral observation. Like the *Tatler*, it shows us a club of original figures; but in this case the types are developed, individual at once, and coloured with one and the same genial humanity. Among them, Sir Roger de Coverley, an idealised country gentleman, of softened characteristics, is a personage living enough to have taken his place amongst the best known creations in literature. The outline of this figure, traced out by Steele, is filled in by Addison with delicate touches; it is bathed in a light of indulgent irony which gives it a family likeness to the delightful, smiling portraits by means of which Dickens, with an art that is richer but not finer, will suggest his instinctive philosophy of cordiality. The group of which he is the centre forms with him a discreetly idyllic picture of English society; and as Addison preaches the reciprocal goodwill of classes, the toning down of party rivalry, he does show some preference for the representative of the trading upper middle class, Sir Andrew Freeport, the symbol of the new order of things, but he borrows an element of the social virtue which he teaches from the patriarchal spirit of old agricultural England.

Such is the double movement animating the doctrine in action, which the *Spectator* practically is: in its effort to diffuse a moral tone of which the growing middle classes are the principal source, its bent is towards the future of national life as of literature; but, in so far as it tries, underneath a gap, an aristocratic and dryly intellectual period, to link up again the continuity of a broader personality, and of this national life itself, its trend is towards the past.

Moralising sentiment here already reveals the directions in which it will influence the tastes of the public and of writers; it tends to lead them back to simple, popular and emotional values; to the great expressions of a poetic temperament formerly sovereign, but now in disfavour. The return to Shakespeare and Milton, which is perceptible on every side, is confirmed in the *Spectator;* and the essays of Addison on *Paradise Lost,* though one must not exaggerate the novelty of their appearance at this date, have done much to establish the place of this recent English work in a hierarchy, the only principle of which at this epoch is furnished by classical tradition. Addison's criticism still strives, and not without reason, to ruin the shaken prestige of the "conceits" and falsely elegant turns which classicism for two generations now had been opposing, but which, through an inevitable confusion, its cult of verbal perfection had sometimes seemed to encourage. Addison reaches the extreme limit of his audacity when he praises the naïve or pathetic charm of old-time ballads, such as *Chevy Chase,* or *The Children in the Wood,* and thus stimulates the timid partiality of his middle-class readers for these spontaneous fruits of national genius, though he thinks it necessary to justify their taste by parallels borrowed from ancient literatures.

The variety of the subjects, a supple adaptation to the preferences of the public, and at the same time a sufficiently skilful reaction against certain habits, certain defects, to call into play the deeper resolutions of a society bent on disciplining and correcting itself, as to superficial habits of selfishness; a gift for the concrete illustration of themes, a gallery of original portraits, a broad outlook upon social realities, with nothing that recalls the open struggles of interests; a harmony with an obscure instinct of middle-class minds, which urges them towards the affirmation of more national ways of living and feeling—such are the major reasons for the success of the *Spectator.* But a finished literary art also contributes its share.

These minute, carefully executed sketches, form a series of vignettes in which each has its own individual worth, while all gain an added value through their grouping. In them the essay attains one of its perfect forms; a short-lived perfection, in keeping with an age when, on the one hand, the number of readers is increasing, when modern journalism comes into existence, and when serious themes can already be treated so as to suit the rapid attention that will be bestowed upon them; when, on the other hand, reading remains enough of a privilege, when the reader's mind still lends itself readily enough, and moral themes keep enough of their prestige, for reflections of a didactic nature to be willingly listened to, and the artistic care bestowed upon them not to seem out of place. There is here a just balance that is for once established, but which, in this literary kind, will not again be found. The *Essays of Elia,* in the following century, will be an equally successful achievement, but a different one.

It is fair to trace to Addison the most solid merits of these little masterpieces, in which Steele has a substantial share. Addison possesses a firmer sense of composition, a more compact style; the quality of his prose is more equal; and it is under his guidance that Steele seems to have regularised an often delightful, but diffuse verve. With the chosen proportion of the whole, the simple elegance, the distinguished ease of a language that benefits without effort by all the progress of classical prose, one must above all praise the gift for expressing shades and conveying hints, and the delicacy of the suggestions. These half-tones suit the aim of papers which, though playful, are often concerned with manners, and implicitly follow the model of fashionable conversation; they are also in keeping with a discreet form of sermonizing; lastly, they supply the matter, the usual means for a sly spirit of comedy, a humour, which, emanating from a general attitude of the thought, radiates over everything which that thought touches upon, without however translating itself, most often, into the words, by anything else than a delicately significant inflection of the feeling of their value, which presides over their choice.

Addison died young, and these modest essays remain the masterwork of his life. The triumphal success of his *Cato* was due to the rivalry of the political parties, which both wanted to find favourable allusions in it. His comedy, *The Drummer,* owed its failure no doubt, as has often been said, to the lack of dramatic power; but it is a pretty piece of work, not wanting in observation; the dialogue has almost the finesse of Congreve, and although less brilliant is more natural. Addison would have left behind the memory of a wholly charming and attractive personality, had not Pope, full of the resentment of an estranged and embittered friendship, published after his death that terrible pen-portrait of Atticus,[1] which, with such cruel shrewdness, brings to light the under side of a saint's effigy. It may be said of this interpretation that it is admirably penetrating, and nevertheless unjust; the figure which it builds up systematises latent possibilities which a character of strong will has neutralised in itself, without being able to destroy them, and the existence of which, entirely subconscious and dim, is only visible to a hostile and keen sight. Addison does not seem to have been innocent of an instinctive jealousy towards Pope; but Pope's wrongdoing with regard to him was more conspicuous.

4. The Middle-Class Spirit and the Drama; First Symptoms.—Addison was too much imbued with the classical tradition, not to allow it to dominate him when he came to write a tragedy. Within his own life-time, the change of atmosphere due to the new social influences at work brings about a return to the national spirit of drama. The comedy of Colley Cibber and Steele is of a sufficiently marked tonality to be studied in connection with the beginnings of sentimental literature. The plays of Rowe and those of Young can be placed by the side of the literary compromises at which the inspiration of the middle-class had stopped in the *Spectator.*

They are interesting symptoms, but little else. Already in the work of Dryden himself, as in that of Otway and Lee, there was to be seen the survival of the seeds of emotion and art, the spontaneous flowering of which had been the free tragedy of the Elizabethans. Rowe[2] goes no further, even if there is a clearer consciousness in his return to the past. *The Fair Penitent* and *Jane Shore* are transitional plays; but despite the bloody fury of the first, despite the wholly exterior imitation of Shakespeare's style in the second—which has its sober moments and a certain powerfulness—one cannot see in it anything that really eludes the essential customs of classicism. The interest of these works lies rather in the fact that they testify to the evolution of public taste; and this taste, while it returns with fondness to the memories of the Renaissance theatre, tends in reality towards a moralising sentimentalism. Rowe is half-way to the domestic drama which Lillo will bring to its full realisation.

Young's[3] tragedies are a striking symptom of the inward movement of minds. Here we have a writer whose education was wholly classical, and in whom the national instinct is now awakening; he strives after energy, liberty of expression, only to attain to violence and bombast. But the intention, the desire behind such work create an appreciable difference between these plays and those of Thomson, for example, whose *Sophonisba*[1] is cast in the mould of pure convention, and has more unity, but still less relief.

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[1] *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot,* 1735; the portrait had been written at an earlier date.

[2] Nicholas Rowe, 1674–1718, staged the *Fair Penitent* in 1703, *Jane Shore* in 1714 (edn. Hart, Belles-Lettres Series, 1907). In 1709 he published an edition of Shakespeare, carefully compiled, and with notes on the poet's life, which he had collected from oral tradition.

[3] Edward Young staged his *Busiris* in 1719, *The Revenge* in 1721. See Thomas, *Le Poète Edward Young,* 1901; 2nd part, chap. iii. For the poetic work of Young, see below, Book III. chap. ii.

To be consulted: Aitken, *Life of Steele,* 1889; Ashton, *Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne,* 1883; Beljame (title quoted); *Cambridge History of English Literature,* vol. viii. chaps. vi. and vii. vol. ix. chaps. i. and ii.; Dennis, *Studies in English Literature,* 1883; P. Dottin, *Daniel De Foe et ses romans,* 1924; Gosse, *A History of Eighteenth Century Literature,* 1887; Lecky, *History of England in the Eighteenth Century,* vols. i. and ii., 1878–90; Lewis, *The Advertisements of the Spectator,* 1909; G. S. Marr, *The Periodical Essayists of the Eighteenth Century,* 1924; Morgan, *The Rise of the Novel of Manners,* 1911; Perry, *English Literature in the Eighteenth Century,* 1883; J. G. Robertson, *Studies in the Genesis of Romantic Theory in the Eighteenth Century,* 1923; Tupper, *Representative English Dramas from Dryden to Sheridan;* Ward, *History of English Dramatic Literature,* vol. iii., 1899.

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[1] 1730. See Book III. chap. ii.

CHAPTER V

THE DAWN OF SENTIMENTALISM IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

1. **Diverging Inspirations.**—With the controversialists of thought, the opening years of the eighteenth century appeared to be absorbed by a vast endeavour of analysis and criticism. With the middle-class writers, on the contrary, there is visible a more or less conscious searching after the positive solutions, which the practical tendencies of the citizen demand. These solutions are instinctively sought in a return to the concrete, in a firmer grasp of actual things, the expression of which is realism; in a moral reform of individual life, in a more cordial good-fellowship; and behind these diverse aspirations, it is sentiment that we see or divine; it is a deep and hidden movement of the inner rhythm, the working of which is made easier by the progress of the middle classes. But with these writers, sentiment is still restrained, and fused with other tendencies; it hardly justifies itself definitely; and the significance of the moral changes which take place can pass unnoticed.

Some of their contemporaries allow one better to appreciate the nature and the trend of this same movement; either because their thought, having a philosophical character, shows more clearly and more precisely its lines of development; or because their temperament offers less resistance to the appeal of sentimental inspiration.

Under the heading "the literature of sentiment," it is the dissident writers of the classical age that one must study. Their dissidence, however, is not hard and fast. They show, most often, a compromise with the dominant influences of their time.

Thus only a difference of degree separates them from the elements of moral variation, which were to be found even in the greatest representatives of classicism.

It is possible and useful, nevertheless, to classify them as a separate group. With them, the new background of impulse becomes characteristic. However tempered it may be by its combination with orthodox motives, or by the conformity of its expression with the standards of classical art, it comes out through the whole personality of the writer. This personality reveals another moral ideal, that is to say, another literary ideal as well.

The present chapter is inseparable from the preceding one; it is the continuation and natural development of it. The work of one writer—Steele—is divided between both. Sentimental comedy is the earliest artistic expression of the silent transformation of public taste.

2. **Philosophy and Mysticism; Berkeley, Shaftesbury, Law, etc.**—The philosophy of this period is not entirely rational. The temperaments of several among its most original thinkers are modified by a strong admixture of different tendencies.

Berkeley's idealism[1] is, above all, a metaphysical theory; if he denies the actual existence of matter, he proceeds not by intuition, but by reasoning, and demonstrates his thesis in conformity with the strictest logic. But at the origin of the doctrine there is certainly a deep prepossession, of a religious and moral nature; his very intelligence is impassioned; and the character of the man is all lit up with the warm radiance of a sentimental and humanitarian zeal.

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[1] George Berkeley, 1685–1753, born in Ireland, was connected with Trinity College, Dublin, then travelled on the Continent, and formed the project of evangelising the American Indians and reforming the manners of the whites; after the failure of his enterprise, he became Bishop of Cloyne, and interested himself philanthropically in social

His life, his doings, his occasional writings, bear the traces of it. A lofty, generous nature, he sacrifices everything for a sort of civilising crusade, a far-off chimera, which makes him one of the intellectual pioneers of America. The natural scenery of the New World strikes his imagination, as before he had admired that of Italy, and he celebrates it in verse. As early as 1721, he draws up the plan of a kind of national regeneration, which he deems necessary in order to quicken the conscience of an impious and corrupt age.[1] He has a high notion of his episcopal duties, and deems it a part of them to concern himself with social reforms. Pope, who was not lavish of such praise, granted him "every virtue."

His clear prose, of a perfect simplicity and ease in the explanation of subtle theories, has, especially in his *Dialogues*, a charm that is almost Greek. There is a wholly classical intellectualism in the rigour of his philosophy of "ideas," which turns the data of experience, for each individual, into a system of signs, a divine language, presented to our consciousness by an external and omnipresent Spirit. The idealistic preoccupations—in the emotional sense—which bend this doctrine towards a kind of enthusiastic paradox, are not at first revealed in the unfolding of its quiet audacity.[2]

But with the passing of years, Berkeley's thought draws nearer Plato, and becomes impregnated with a more obvious mysticism. The aroma of his personality is felt more distinctly in that strange work *Siris*, where the progress of mind along the chain of existence, from the most humble physical properties even to spiritual virtues, traces the stages of actual divine emanation; and where the deciphering of the universe is guided by the intuitive effort of the imagination. It is in a Christian but at the same time pantheistic philosophy that this remarkable thinker completes his progressive development; and starting from Locke, he finally joins the Platonic tradition, so living a force in England since the Renaissance, and which the age of dominant Reason had almost entirely interrupted.

The link with Locke, and the divergence of opinion with him, are not less marked in Shaftesbury.[3] He is his pupil, and in a sense continues his thought; he protects Toland; his religious opinions make him regarded, and not without cause, as one of the Deists; his *Letter Concerning Enthusiasm* (1708) gives vent to the irony of an aristocratic intellect when confronted with the coarse intolerant zeal of a popular fanaticism. His attitude is that of an enlightened, detached onlooker; the eighteenth century will see many of these courteous,

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problems. His philosophical writings form two groups: *An Essay towards a New Theory of Vision*, 1709; *Principles of Human Knowledge*, 1710; *Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*, 1713 (first group); *Alciphron*, 1732; *Theory of Vision*, 1733; *Siris*, 1744 (second group). *Works*, ed. by Fraser, 1901. See Lyon, *L'Idéalisme en Angleterre au XVIIIe siècle*, 1888; Johnston, *Development of Berkeley's Philosophy*, 1923.

[1] *An Essay towards Preventing the Ruin of Great Britain.*

[2] The work of John Norris served as a link between Berkeley and Malebranche, the latter of whom was adapted by Norris in his *Essay towards the Theory of an Ideal of the Intelligible World*, 1701–4.

[3] Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury, grandson of the minister of Charles II., was born in 1671, and had Locke for a tutor; of delicate health, he passed the greater part of his life abroad, and died in 1713. His *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, 1711 (2nd edition augmented, 1713), was a collection of various treatises, which appeared from 1699 to 1710. Ed. by Robertson, 1900. See Rand, *Life, Letters, etc., of Shaftesbury*, 1900; Fowler, *Shaftesbury and Hutcheson*, 1882.

sceptical observers, and it is amongst them that the classical temperament, in its lucid and arid form, will best perpetuate itself.

But Shaftesbury, in other respects, figures as an apostle. His favourite masters are the Stoics, and Plato; he reconciles them with a Christianity that is broad and coloured by an eclectic idealism. He has the tastes, and often the conduct, of a philanthropist; he goes very far along the path of tolerance, and claims with generous ardour the absolute liberty of opinion. Above all, his thought reveals intuitive and sentimental tendencies. He reacts with all his strength against the utilitarian theory of ethics, and on this point dissociates himself very clearly from Locke. His doctrine emphasises the naturally altruistic instincts of human nature; our affections, he holds, bring us to desire the happiness of others, and a rule of life can thus be framed upon the balancing of egoism and the gift of self. Conscience will have as a guide, in this delicate fusion, a superior intuitiveness, which will immediately distinguish what is good and what is evil. This infallible "moral sense" is only one aspect of the æsthetic sense, which perceives the beauty of things. For creation is a universal harmony. . . .

This theory of the perfection of the universe has had its echo in the pantheistic optimism of the *Essay on Man,* from which Pope drew happy inspirations. As he expounds it, Shaftesbury's prose warms up to a lyric eloquence which has been charged, not unduly, with an elaborate and artificial distinction, but which possesses, nevertheless, an indisputably contagious virtue. This critic of enthusiasm, who is also in another sense its defender, is an enraptured lover of all that is sublime in the world, of the overpowering harmony between our emotions and the scenes of nature; and as by the effusions of his faith in the goodness of man he announces Rousseau, so not a few of his pages are already—in every respect save the language—those of a Romanticist. His very wide influence throughout Europe is an element in the international contagion of sensibility as a philosophical principle.

For long, Shaftesbury was not given his true place in the history of ideas. This unjust forgetfulness has since been remedied. The quality of his moral personality is noble; his thought is actuated by a passion which excludes neither lucidity, nor yet the most genuine and heartfelt tolerance. Intellectually he has been a fruitful force. His work is rich in ideas, the formulæ of which have been outstepped by the modern conception of ethics, but not perhaps in the sphere of creative impulse. Whatever may be the weak points of his doctrine, it cannot be denied that in an epoch of dry matter-of-fact thinking he soothed the imagination of his readers with a music which appealed to the emotions, and which set vibrating the presageful echo of future voices.

His disciple, Hutcheson,[1] systematises his theory of the moral sense. On the other hand, he grants to the exercise of this instinct a sanction in the nature of a pleasure; thus, virtue coincides with the pleasurable effusion of a goodliness which finds its happiness in that of others. Duty, therefore, tends to merge in the search after a common good, and utilitarian ethics, against the egoistical form of which Shaftesbury had reacted, again become the end towards which the spontaneous movement of English thought is tending.

Meanwhile, the truly mystical inspiration is concentrated in some isolated thinkers, who give expression in literature to the still intense religious fervour of certain sects. William Law[2] is the most eminent figure in this group, whose secret action at the heart of an age of Reason must not be overlooked. He forms the connecting link between the vast Puritan movement in the seventeenth century, and the Methodist Revival of the eighteenth.

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[1] Francis Hutcheson, 1694–1746, Professor of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow, published *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue,* 1725; *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections,* etc., 1726. His *System of Moral Philosophy* (1755) appeared after his death. See Scott, *Hutcheson,* 1900.

[2] William Law, 1686–1761; *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life,* 1728; *The Case of Reason,* 1731; *An Appeal to All that Doubt,* 1740; *The Way to Divine Knowl-*

The *Serious Call* is one of those books which, for two centuries, have been handed down from generation to generation by a middle class ever intent on the reading of pious works. It must not be confounded with the average edifying and mediocre tract. Despite its prolixity and repetition, the merit of the work lies in the cogency and wealth of its logic, in the construction of the development, and in the nervous style. Its rhetoric, at times a trifle luxuriant, is wholly classical, but is fanned into flame by an inward zeal which tends, as a natural end, to the mystic union with God. Above all, the passion of an uncompromising Christianity denounces all the pleasing foibles, the indulgent weaknesses of the world; it refutes the arguments of lukewarmness and compromise; it will have the whole soul, and claims it unreservedly for the all-absorbing practice of faith.

The other and less well-known works of Law give definite shape to his intellectual adhesion to mysticism. *The Case of Reason* refutes Tindal in attacking what is the essential principle of Deism—the possibility for the human mind of knowing with certitude the attributes of the Divine, and the general plan of creation. Assigning to Reason its limits, it is the very foundation of belief on which classicism is built that Law is putting to the test. Later, he becomes impregnated with the influence of Jacob Boehme, and *The Way to Divine Knowledge* expounds, in a style that is always controlled but at the same time inspired, the conditions and stages in the reunion of the soul with God, that is to say, in the return of the part to the whole whence it emanates.

Law is a direct predecessor of John Wesley. He foreshadows the religious revival which will be one of the moral preparations towards the renewing of literature.

3. Poetry; Lady Winchelsea, Watts.—The poetry of this age has isolated notes which pure classicism cannot explain. Outside of these scattered elements, there are a few poetic temperaments in which an inspiration of a clearly different character is concentrated. In Thomson, as early as 1726,[1] the feeling for Nature assumes the importance of a central, privileged theme. But Thomson is one of a numerous group of descriptive poets, each of whom forms a stage in a long transition, throughout the course of the century; he must not, therefore, be separated from them.

The deep continuity of the current of imaginative emotion which has dried up on the surface, in literature, but which persists in the subconsciousness of many, and preserves an active if not æsthetic force in the moral life of numerous groups, is already revealed in the natural instincts of some dissident personalities, during the first years of the century. Lady Winchelsea,[2] after having written a pindaric poem in keeping with the taste of the day, abandons herself to the direct suggestion of simple things—a tree, the song of the nightingale, the peace of evening; she describes the veiled splendour of the landscape, the reflection of the moon and of the stirring leaves upon the waters, the mysterious majesty of ruins, and even to the shiver of fear which the silent approach of a horse calls forth when the pasture deadens the sound of its hoofs; out of all these fugitive emotions, she feels that a brooding mood is being formed, too full and fraught with meaning to be expressed in words; and her *Nocturnal Reverie* is thus one of the most impressive paradoxes

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edge, 1752. *Serious Call,* ed. by Overton, 1898; see Overton, *W. Law, Nonjuror and Mystic,* 1881.

[1] The first of the *Seasons, Winter,* appeared in 1726.

[2] 1660–1720. *The Spleen,* 1701; *Miscellany Poems,* 1713.

in the history of literature, striking as it does, at this date, the very modern note of a Romanticism in which Wordsworth, a century later, will recognise his own.

With Isaac Watts,[1] one touches the link between the spiritual fervour of a still active though latent religious life, and the possible renovation of poetry. The contemporary of Law, Watts gives expression in verse to a faith that is less mystical but as ardently sincere; something of this ardour animates and raises his lyrical effusions, without succeeding, however, in melting the cold surface of a rather artificial language. But while he is not a renovator of form, he owes it to the truth of his inspiration that he has written songs which pious English souls have never since forgotten. Among attempts of very unequal value, spoiled in many places by the abuse of classical convention, and despite the rigour of an austere Puritanism, he has known how to reconcile zeal with an earnest simplicity in tones of moving appeal. His *Divine Songs for Children* have lines which make one think of Blake; and this instinctive effort of adaptation leads him, at least, to seek rhythms which are freer, and sometimes happily successful; one of these is his blank verse, which through the analogy of the sentiment as of the measure is not unlike that of Cowper.

4. The Beginnings of Sentimental Comedy; Cibber, Steele.—It is in the theatre that sensibility finds the largest scope. The new public, with whom middle-class influences tend to play a dominant part, here exercises an action more quickly appreciable than elsewhere; it begins to transform comedy, where the aristocratic spirit of the Restoration had for long prevailed. The initiative of Colley Cibber, then that of Steele, answer to the latent needs of audiences to whom the sorry plight—cynically presented—of merchants made butts of by young fashionable noblemen, no longer offers the same attraction. The instinct of the majority of those frequenting the theatre now inclines them to wish for real plots, where the joys and troubles of their uneventful lives may be productive of heart-stirring emotions; where the middle classes may no longer be a target for ridicule, but an object of interest; where the problems of conduct, family, marriage, may be dealt with in a tone which will no longer shock decorum, and by virtue of the tears they cause to flow, may contribute to the edification of souls. This public is won over, beforehand, to the arguments of Collier. Under its silent influence sentimental comedy comes into existence before the end of the seventeenth century; and while it is far from being a complete success in its first attempt, it begins a struggle against traditional comedy which lasts throughout the whole age of classicism, and which ends to its advantage. It announces the middle-class drama of Lillo and, in certain of its realistic tendencies, the pathetic and domestic novel of Richardson.

Its history, in the early stages, is rather complicated. It forms not so much a new province of literature as a new spirit, which after its first expression in the work of Colley Cibber,[2] in 1696, attracts disciples and, through a reaction, rouses adversaries. This movement is interwoven with the decline of Restoration comedy. Though Vanbrugh, in *The Relapse*, matches his ironical verve against the new-fangled glorification of goodness of heart, he is not himself absolutely impervious to the contagion of sentiment; and Farquhar is entirely won over to it. The first years of the eighteenth century seem to mark the success of sentimental comedy, with Richard Estcourt (*The Fair Example,* 1703); Steele (*The Lying Lover,* 1703; *The Tender Husband,* 1705; *The Conscious Lovers,* 1722); and even Addison, whose *Drummer* is written in this spirit. And one can see in an anonymous play, *The Rival Brothers* (1704), then in Aaron Hill's *The Fatal Extravagance* (1721), the germs of middle-class tragedy, which will extend the same moral and social principles to plays of a more properly serious intent.

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[1] 1674–1748; a dissenting minister, preacher and poet; *Horæ Lyricæ*, 1706; *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, 1707; *Divine Songs for Children*, 1715; *Psalms of David Imitated*, 1719.

[2] Colley Cibber, 1671–1757, the son of a sculptor of foreign origin, had a long and full career as actor, theatrical manager and dramatist; his quarrel with Pope made him the hero of the second *Dunciad*. Among his original plays, his adaptations of the English and French theatre, etc., mention should be made of: *Love's Last Shift*, 1696; *The Careless Husband*, 1704; *The Lady's Last Stake*, 1707; *The Non-Juror* (imitated from *Tartuffe*), 1717; *The Provoked Husband* (the completed version of *A Journey to London*, by Vanbrugh), 1728. He wrote his autobiography: *Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber, Comedian*, 1740. See Bernbaum, *The Drama of Sensibility*, 1915.

But traditional comedy defends itself; it has, to support it, the habits of the public, the atmosphere of a society in which loose-living is restrained, but not overcome, and in which scepticism remains fashionable; lastly, the tone of a primarily rational literature. The death of Queen Anne, the succession of the Hanoverian sovereigns, restore to the court the influence it had formerly exercised as a radiating centre of lighter morals. The graph, so to say, of the reform begun in manners falls after 1714. Artificially prolonged, comedy after the model of the Restoration survives with Mrs. Centlivre, with Colley Cibber himself, always on the watch for the changes of public taste, and Gay, whose *Beggar's Opera* is a parody of sentimentalism in its early stages.

Thus the rapid movement which appeared to be carrying the century towards the victory of sentiment flags for a generation, owing to social circumstances, and the widespread authority of the classical standards. This check is noticeable both in the progress of manners and in the transformation of literature. It secures for the great period of classicism a relative homogeneity; it throws back to the end of this period such literary events as the decisive appearance of middle-class tragedy, which allow one to realise the evolution of taste in an incontrovertible manner.

The sentimental comedy of Cibber and Steele is therefore a precocious symptom. Its value, moreover, is mainly that of a symptom. With Cibber, the appeal to the emotions is of the most superficial nature; it is the less profound, as the man's temperament does not possess the reserves of sincere sensitiveness which alone could nourish it. Cibber was, above all, a clever stage manager. His private life reveals something other than the family virtues and the tender indulgence of which his plays fondly parade the contagious example. His theatrical instinct, always eager for new effects, shows him from his very first comedy what a hold a certain strain of pathos can have over middle-class feelings, and the pleasure that can accrue from the shedding of gentle tears, at the sight of a conjugal reconciliation in which an exalted love conquers a hard-hearted husband.

What was really new in such a scene was not the theoretical intensity of the sentiment—tragedy, as we have it in Otway or Dryden, was full of frenzied emotions—but its familiar, probable, average quality, middle-class in a word, its possible analogy with the actual experiences of the spectators; and above all, the moral optimism which emanated from it, the infectious power of an effusive faith in the latent fecundity, always ready to burst forth, of a source of goodness hidden in the depths of the soul. Classical rationalism analysed man with a lucidity immune from illusions; with the authors of the first sentimental comedies, as with their contemporary, Shaftesbury, there is adumbrated the doctrine of a human nature that is generous and good, a doctrine of which Rousseau will be the European prophet.

Success gives Cibber a clearer conception of his thesis; he feels himself carried by the current of moral reform, so true is it that the unity of middle-class influence associates the need for sentiment with the inclination to effect a reform in manners. *The Careless Husband* accentuates the moralising tone. But these plays are made up of a mixture of incongruous elements; they still recall in many respects the cynicism of the Restoration. While the elegant coxcomb, Lord Foppington, now becomes ludicrous, the freedom of insinuation is still extreme. Emotion and morals are none the less displayed, in such a crude manner as to exclude all art; while the best plays of Cibber are not without merit, it is only rarely that he rises above mediocrity.

With all his serious faults, Steele endows sentimental comedy with greater finesse and charm. With him, the personality does not jar with the work; his life was not exemplary, but the fond effusion, the appraising of homely virtues, the moralising principles, which make up the character of his plays, answer the permanent preferences of his being. Moreover, he has a gift for comedy, an inventiveness, a liveliness in dialogue; his first play, *The Funeral*, is the most amusing of all; the desire to write in compliance with the injunctions of Collier, and to uphold the part of apostle which from now onwards he assumes, next results in the over-stressing of his didactic intent.

The Conscious Lovers, however, has a great success as an appeal to sensibility. In vain does Dennis point out that the play does not show us real characters, but examples to follow, and further, that the subject is not comic; the public does not trouble to know if it is wrong in applauding a comedy at which it sheds tears, since it finds pleasure in weeping. And Steele, in order to justify himself for having preached against duelling, invokes in his reply the complicity of the audience. . . . To explain this complicity, still other reasons are to be found than the contagious, moving power of the play. *The Conscious Lovers* portrays on the stage a merchant, Mr. Sealand, virtuous, dignified, philanthropic, the model of the "gentleman" according to the new type of society, and thus in striking fashion associates middle-class influences with the literature of feeling.

To be consulted: Bernbaum, *The Drama of Sensibility*, 1915; *Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. viii. chap. vi.; vol. ix. chaps. ii. vi. xi. xiii.; vol. x. chap. iv.; Doughty, *English Lyric in the Age of Reason*, 1923; Fowler, *Shaftesbury and Hutcheson*, 1882; Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, 1899; Lyon, *L'Idéalisme en Angleterre au XVIII^e Siècle*, 1888; Overton, *William Law, Nonjuror and Mystic*, 1881; idem, *The English Church, 1714–1800*, 1906; Leslie Stephen, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, 1902.

BOOK III

THE SURVIVAL OF CLASSICISM (1740–1770)

CHAPTER I

DOCTRINAL CLASSICISM: JOHNSON

1. Character of the Period; Formative Influences.—The middle years of the eighteenth century do not show any distinct cleavage in the history of ideas or in that of form. Classicism continues to rule after the age of Pope. The authority of the doctrine is not shaken; on the contrary, it seems to be definitively established.

It is natural, however, to place the close of a period about the years 1740–1745. A brilliant set of writers, whom life and literature had equally brought together, now pass out of sight; and with them are lost or subdued a brilliance, a sureness, a still youthful maturity in the balanced handling of rational inspirations, that had given to the first decades of the century, as a whole, a relatively simple and harmonious character.

In the decades which follow, the aspect of things undergoes a gradual and slow transformation. No revolution in art is announced; principles mostly remain as they were. But life ebbs away from certain forms, and begins, as if by preference, to quicken others. Classicism had brought its principal effort to bear upon expression, and it is in poetry that expression reaches its full artistic quality; Pope had been the centre and law-giver of his generation. Now, after him, no one comes forth to succeed in the heritage which Dryden had handed down to him. In the orthodox kind of writing, poetical inspiration weakens. New inspirations are welling forth. They lack yet the boldness, the consciousness of themselves that would have secured the renewing of expression; they are modelled upon traditions, and do not question the rules in force. If they are innovating, it is usually without knowing it. On the other hand, in certain directions where the classical age had but sketched out the application of its principle, we find evidence of more daring initiative; the novel of manners brings forth all the fecundity of that realistic observation which Classicism admitted in theory, but which its instincts and scruples did not allow it to push to its logical end.

The new period is therefore of a very definitely mixed character. It prolongs that which precedes it by keeping practically along the same lines. At the same time, it develops with growing vigour the germs of dissidence, the signs of psychological renovation, which the classical discipline had been unable to stamp out. The duality already visible in the time when Pope and De Foe, Bolingbroke and Shaftesbury were writing, continues and only becomes more marked. But whilst the classical age was stable enough, one can henceforth feel a progress, a movement at the back of things. The two elements vary in their absolute value, and in their relationship. If official authority is still vested in classical rationalism, the reviving forces of sentiment and of middle-class literature now assume larger proportions, and become encroaching; the balance is already turning in their favour; and one has no difficulty in foreseeing that a day will come when the prestige of tradition will give way before all this secret growth of innovating inspirations.

The contemporaries had no prevision of this kind. No one succeeds Pope as the head of orthodox poetry; but a man is found to inherit his authority in criticism, and to assure the continuity of the doctrine. Johnson eminently represents the persistence of classical dogma. His sovereign influence in literature upholds against all menace, either open or concealed, the cult of artistic values which Reason had established. Behind the outward permanence of his reign, the hidden work of transformation goes on in silence; all around him, the signs of a new spirit are visible. He it is, together with the influence he exerts, or the set of writers who are unreservedly attached to the old order of things, who perpetuate the fiction of official poetry; the standards of literature do not change.

Such are the general lines of this age—the middle years of the century, from 1740 to about 1770. They can be explained by the hidden working of moral and social forces. In the minds of authors and readers alike, the awakening of emotional tendencies, already perceptible as early as 1700, is confirmed and becomes accentuated; the change thus started develops. The call for sentiment begins to associate itself with the need of imagination. In society, meanwhile, a parallel and connected movement takes place; the middle-class is more and more making its own will recognised in politics, in life and manners. The authority of the aristocracy is not indeed negatived or destroyed, but permeated, modified and continually made more supple, by the bourgeois elements which are commingling with it.

Admitted to a share in social power, the middle-class adapts itself to the culture in vogue, not without correcting it in the direction of its own genuine preferences. It appropriates classicism, after having impregnated it, so to say, with its moralising needs. The compromise which was only beginning to shape itself in the time of Addison and Steele is now, in the time of Johnson, an accomplished fact.

The middle-class of 1740 does not bring with it any clear desire for reform in the province of art; it has tendencies, but no principles. Socially, its deepest instincts are conservative. It takes its place in the oligarchic framework of the government without shaking it in any way. It is a neighbouring and similar, but other class, more numerous, and proceeding from the growth of modern industry and from a more intense commercial life, which will be destined in the following century to enlarge this framework, in order to make way for itself.

No deep social or economic upheaval menaces as yet the established order of things in the middle years of the century. The inner rhythm set moving does not encounter, under the circumstances, anything that might accelerate it; whilst the literary forms oppose all change with the inevitable resistance of consecrated, official values. Sentimentalism invades life and letters; and the re-awakened spirit of Puritanism engages against the sceptical liberty in manners in a struggle that will not stop until it has achieved its victory. But although society is becoming more and more middle-class, and the soul of the nation is undergoing a radical change, there still reigns a rational literature, in which the dominant stamp is that of its aristocratic origins.

Johnson is the head and symbol of this survival of a tradition that is secretly undermined, but that is still kept up through its outer supports, and that even draws a certain increase of vigour from the new social elements. He represents a temporary fusion, which seems decisive and final, of morality with the taste for solid and regular artistic scales. Belief in rules with him comes so near to the religious conscience as to be indistinguishable from it any more. He is the central figure in an age of bourgeois classicism.

The study of this age will therefore mean a continual swing from movements, men and works that are animated by the spirit of yesterday, or by a spirit that has scarcely changed, to others in which the new inspiration is predominant; from a literature of Reason to a literature of Sentiment. The two masses, on the whole, almost balance each other, though only one of them has an impulse that carries it towards the future, and a force of attraction that constantly adds to its substance.

2. Johnson; His Temperament.—The personality of Johnson[1] counts for more than his literary work. His influence proceeds from the bulk, and the weight of his character, the powerful base upon which are built up his opinions and ideas, and of which these seem to be only the slightly specialized prolongation.

His was a figure of note among his contemporaries; his physical traits have been given permanence by the painter Reynolds in a speaking portrait—square of breadth, the neck sunken between the shoulders, the face thick-set, with a heavy chin, a narrow wrinkled forehead, and full lips; the gaze questioning and frowning; an expression of concentrated, slightly bitter seriousness. From it all there radiates a philosophy of experience and reflection, thought out by a clear judgment, by a balanced mind, and rooted in the resolution of an energy bound up with the supreme needs of action. The rough vigour, the gravity, the obstinate realism which are breathed forth in this physiognomy, made a silent appeal to the deep instincts of the English people; the most normal temperament of the most representative class, the middle one, saw itself therein; and Carlyle, an admirer of spiritual force associated with an uncouth exterior, ranked Johnson among the national heroes. He has in a very full measure, indeed, the value of a symbol; he represents the intellectualised, superior type of the middle-class citizens who then claim and are already conquering the moral control of society.

Born as he was in the midst of books, he begins in his father's shop the life of a voracious reader, who never exhausts a subject but dips into everything; his instincts and literary ambitions are ineffaceably stamped by the writers of antiquity, who form his early studies, and whose works he first imbibes; his classicism is thus founded upon habit, upon the impressions of youth; it gains stability in the search after a disciplined order; and it is made immune from all influences by virtue of an innate preference for orthodoxy, a respect for traditional hierarchies, a fear of or contempt for all innovations. A rational attitude of mind, without excess or system, more empiric yet than logical; conservative tendencies; the sincerity of a personal judgment that has revised for itself all time-consecrated admirations, and has almost always discovered new reasons to approve of them; lastly, religious and moral needs that meet with their satisfaction in an austere philosophy of life, and do not experience any trouble to find it again in the wisdom of centuries, under its pagan as much as under its Christian form—such are the inner sources of Johnson's literary doctrine. It derives from them an exceptional assurance as well as an exceptional conviction; and it thus answers to all the deep desires of a nature that is rich and sound, but in no way happy or facile, one in which life has left a permanent bent to pessimism, and where a solitary mind in self-communion speaks with almost mystic intensity.

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[1] Samuel Johnson, born at Lichfield in 1709, the son of a bookseller, studied at Oxford and essayed the profession of schoolmaster, then sought his fortune in London as an author. His first attempts were protracted and difficult; he collaborated in the *Gentleman's Magazine,* where from 1741 to 1744 he wrote the Parliamentary reports; at last he became known and was rescued from penury by certain circumstantial writings, and two satires, *London* (1738) and *The Vanity of Human Wishes* (1749), the *Life* of his friend, the poet Savage (1744), and his tragedy, *Irene* (1749). He edited periodicals, *The Rambler* (1750–52), *The Idler* (1758–60), the former during the time when he was carrying out the vast enterprise of his *Dictionary* (1747–55). Then he wrote a moral novel (*Rasselas,* 1759), and prepared an edition of *Shakespeare* (1765). In 1762 a government pension brought him leisure; from now onwards he was looked up to and played the part of a general guide and adviser to literature. In 1763 he met Boswell, his biographer, and made with him an excursion to Scotland, of which he gave an account (*A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland,* 1775). His last work was *The Lives of the Poets,* a series of biographical and literary memoirs meant to introduce to the public a collection of fifty-two modern English poets. He died in 1784, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. His friend James Boswell (1740–95) published the story of his life: *The Life of Samuel Johnson,* 1791, revised and increased in 1793. *The Works of J.,* ed. by Chalmers, 1806, etc.; *Dictionary,* 4th edn., 1773, the last revised by the author; ed. by Latham, 1866–70; *Rasselas,* ed. by Hill, 1887; J. on *Shakespeare,* ed. Sir W. Raleigh, 1908; see Nichol Smith, *Eighteenth Century Essays on Shakespeare,* 1903; *The Works of the English Poets* (*with the Lives of Johnson*), ed. by Chalmers, 1810; *Lives of the English Poets,* ed. by Hill and Scott, 1905. *The Journal of a Tour through the Hebrides with Johnson,* by Boswell, ed. by Hill, 1887; *Life of J.,* ed. by Glover, 1901; edn. Everyman's Library, 1906. See Carlyle, *On Heroes,* 1840; J. Bailey, *Dr. J. and his Circle,* 1913; Grant, *Life of J.* (Great Writers), 1887; Sir W. Raleigh, *Six Essays on J.,* 1900; Sir L. Stephen (English Men of Letters), 1878; Seccombe, *The Age of Johnson,* 1900; P. H. Houston, *Doctor J., a Study in Eighteenth Century Humanism,* 1923.

The search for balance, with Johnson, is an effort of will, a struggle against himself. Without being in the least romantic, his is a troubled if not divided soul; a narrow but deep sensibility lies hidden beneath its rough exterior. Bourgeois classicism still rests upon the ascendancy of rational needs; but along with the imperious desire for a principle of morality a certain amount of emotion has been infused into it.

And yet, Johnson is the enemy of sentimentalism; his very dictatorial taste clings to all that is sure, tested and verified; he feels a craving, not indeed out of timidity and passiveness, but as the result of reflection, for normality, for the happy mean; he loathes extremes in everything. A code in art chimes with his instinctive need of a moral code; he accepts it and approves of it, therefore, for motives of a more varied and more human nature than was the case with the classicists of the previous generation; and by thus giving it a richer substance of impulses and tendencies, he unwittingly makes it more flexible, and to a certain extent broadens it. His scale of literary values is no longer quite the same as that of Pope; he differs from him in his estimate of Shakespeare, whom he feels and appreciates more intimately. But this code in return partakes of the dogmatic character of a creed; and just as with all beliefs in which conduct is involved, it hardens against all threat of a change. Johnson meets any innovation in literature with unconquerable distrust. The principles of the art of writing remain the same for him as when they were formulated by the masters of modern classicism, after the model of the Ancients. As for the signs of unrest, and the initiatives which are coming to light around him, he either ignores or condemns them. He looks upon the heroic couplet as the highest form of verse; rhyme, he holds, is indispensable to poetry. To imitate the Spenserian stanza is but a futile whim. When confronted by the growing popularity of scenic description, of "Nature," he shows but indifference, and almost disdain. He lives and dies without having understood the deep need for renovation with which the minds of his contemporaries are pregnant.

Thus classicism has from now onwards become a dogma; it is kept alive through its connection with the moral and social needs of authority, order and tradition, rather than through the direct and simple demands of æsthetic taste. At the moment when inspiration seeks new ground, when creative impulses tend to become the privilege of another temperament, and of a new psychological attitude, the secretly threatened orthodoxy intensifies and more clearly realises the consciousness of its own strength. The dogmatic character of this religion in decline is hardening.

3. Works; Poems, Essays.—There is an element of uncertainty in Johnson's literary career; it is crossed by circumstances, and does not offer the picture of a logical and continuous development. Many years pass before he finds himself, and his true vocation. At bottom, no necessary impulse urges him to write, save the need for passing judgment on men and books. He will come, finally, to voice his reflections on the writings of others, and on life; he will be a moralist and critic, and it is as such, sustained by the rich reserves of his temperament, that he will be fully himself.

But before he dare be such, he must earn his living, adapt himself to accepted forms, and try his hand in the fashionable kinds of writing. The classical age has left intact the prestige of regular poetry, and the satires of Pope dominate the classical age. So Johnson pens a satire, *London,* in imitation of Pope; but it is Juvenal, and not Horace, who supplies the model. It is an estimable piece of work, and of a forcefulness that did not pass unnoticed; Pope felt in it the promise of fame. But the silent decisions of instinct are directing into other channels a mind to which prose comes more naturally than verse. Once again, however, he returns to satire; *The Vanity of Human Wishes* is already the stronger and fuller expression of a personality; in it the taste for moral dissertation is more freely indulged; and instead of the traditional commonplaces, we have there maxims still general, but enlivened by the note of an individual philosophy, of a mood which harmonises quite easily with Juvenal's pessimism. These couplets, in spite of their pauses, which the ear foresees and expects, and in spite of their language, strewn as it is with abstractions, quiver with an inner sincerity, that now and then bursts forth in the new vividness of an epithet, or in energetic and dense forms of expression.

These gifts, however, are not enough to revive a style of writing now worn out. Johnson might have continued Pope, without equalling him; but he turns intuitively to other things. His tragedy *Irene* is a further meritorious attempt, without a morrow. Here again, the truth of moral conscience comes to the surface, while the form has a dignity that is at times other than pompous. But ethics do not suffice to sustain the interest of a tragedy; and despite the support of Garrick, the spectators were not carried away by an emotion that was too devoid of tenderness. The feminine touch was always wanting in the genius of Johnson.

Disappointed in poetry, he comes to essay-writing. The *Rambler* and the *Idler* take up again the tradition of the *Spectator.* Reflections of a moralising nature are here more in their place, and this part of Johnson's work is of a solid worth; it has better stood the test of time. To enter into it to-day is to give one's self up to the guidance of a judicious thinker, who sheds the light itself of good sense over all that he touches. His thought is so sound, and appears so natural, that one is tempted into thinking it commonplace; and herein lies its artistic weakness. These robust analyses and arguments manage in places to extract from the gangue of common truths precious stones which would sparkle more brilliantly if they were cut with greater skill; a vein of humour, of keen personal perception, runs through these exercises of a mind which one might regard as subjected to the automatism of a reasoning habit now become settled. But the style confirms the appearance of a wisdom too regular, too sure of itself, too equal throughout, not to be slightly passive: it is ample, imposing, oratorical, cast in a uniform mould; its very firmness, its infallibility, rouse in the reader a longing for fancy and paradox. Our remembrance of the *Spectator* has a grievous effect upon these essays; the grace, the lightness of touch of Addison and Steele offer too sharp a contrast to this massive robustness of Johnson, which becomes heavy and pedantic in comparison. Edified but not delighted, the general public contented itself with this verdict which no doubt was severe; and none to-day, save the specialist, ever reads these works. While lacking the rich picturesque interest of the *Spectator,* they are not without value to the historian of manners; and Johnson himself stands revealed in them with a relishable fullness of touch.

4. **The Dictionary.**—The grammarian and the philosopher had more success than the essayist. The *Dictionary of the English Language* remained, for nearly a century, a work of reference, consulted as such by the layman as well as by the savant. Johnson wanted to write both for the critics and for merely cultivated readers, to strike an average between a literary lexicon and a technical encyclopædia. His desire is above all to "preserve the purity, and determine the sense, of our English idiom"; whilst the value of words, and their pronunciation, are still in a state of instability, he hopes to put an end to variations which his instinct condemns; the need of a set rule—a purely classical need—is the impulse he obeys. He was not specially equipped for this task; but he brings to it a trained power of reflection, a perfect knowledge of the current vocabulary, an instinct for the connecting links and transitions which exist between the successive meanings of a term. The preface in which he expounds, with a remarkable loftiness of view, the intention, the plan and the method of his work, is one of the sources of English linguistics. The development of language, its causes, its aspects, such is the central fact round which works an intuition that is sometimes wrongly informed, but always sound and often gifted with divination. In thus probing beyond the superficial course of language to the deep life of the mind which manifests itself in it, Johnson lays down the principle of that necessary return to the national origins, a dim consciousness of which was being stirred, at that very time, by the inner movement of minds. The English language, he says, has deviated from its original character; its phraseology, and even its structure, have come nearer to the French model; it is now time to correct the excess of this influence; the literature of the Elizabethans is the permanent treasure store of the expressions and the forms in which the particular genius of the English people can gain new vitality.

Johnson's dictionary helped to fix the English language; by determining and classifying the diverse meanings of words, he gave greater sureness to the labour of analysis which constitutes a part of the art of writing. He counts among the influences to which the instrument of literature in the eighteenth century owes its superior stability, and a character of solidity that is, one might say, definitive. He deserves this place through the qualities of logic, clearness and finesse displayed by a mind nurtured on the classics, strong, well balanced, and penetrating. The omissions and errors of the *Dictionary,* notably in the yet badly explored domain of etymology; the personal whims, the flights of prejudice or humour, which lend a paradoxical air to many a definition; an inadequate reading of texts, the effect of which is to give certain elements of the language an undue predominance over others—flaws such as these were inevitable; the *Dictionary* is the work of a single man, hampered by circumstances, and by illness. It remains, however, a monument of industry and intellectual conscience. But it has done nothing to restore to the language that freedom of imagination, that concrete wealth of idiom, which the practice of the Elizabethans possessed. While Johnson's instinct is unwittingly in agreement with the silent preparation of Romanticism, his intellect and reflection on the other hand are purely classical. The *Dictionary* registers and consecrates the intellectualisation of the language effected by a whole century of analysis and logical effort.

5. **"Rasselas"; Literary Criticism.**—A novel, or rather an allegory, *Rasselas;* critical studies—the preface to the edition of Shakespeare, *The Lives of the Poets*—such are Johnson's most solid claims to a place among the reputations which to-day remain living. The harmony of temperament, of

subject and of form has allowed him in these writings to realise his moral purpose with surer artistic success.

Rasselas is an oriental tale, placed in a rather vague setting, and written in a somewhat abstract and solemn style. The classical generality of thought and language in these pages battles victoriously with the picturesque element, the local particularity of the theme, of the incidents and characters; Johnson's imagination evokes pictures with only a brief stroke of the pen; it glides over details without stopping, so impatient is it to discover everywhere and continually the permanent base of human nature. But this language makes up for its slightly artificial quality by its accuracy and clearness, by a sense of balance which, although savouring of oratory, does not reside in the words but in the logic and the thought; the vocabulary, often dignified to the extent of being pompous, is refined by the intelligence of the proper meaning of words, and of their first use. The thought itself, which can be summed up in commonplaces, is saved from banality by a fresh intuitive grasp of the complexity of things, of the illogical demands of conduct. Thus Johnson's rationalism shows itself as wholly penetrated by a profound sense of the limits of Reason; the wisdom he teaches gives first place to experience.

The vivid interest of the book lies in this wisdom, and in the revelation which Johnson has given us therein of himself. *Rasselas* appeared a few weeks after Voltaire's *Candide,* too early to encourage the supposition of an influence; the moral lesson is rather similar in both tales, but they are none the less very different in spirit. Johnson's pessimism springs from an unhappy, not an ironical state of mind. It is accompanied by a persistent profession of faith in virtue, which to him is not a snare, and on the contrary represents the only certitude in life; but whilst man instinctively expects happiness from it, he finds that it is unable to fulfil that hope. What Johnson thus denies, is the invincible utilitarian optimism on which the English conception of duty is built up. The virtuous individual, temperate in his desires, will not, he thinks, be a happy man for that: the ways of Nature and reality are too fertile in unforeseen happenings, and the only true prudence lies in a submission to events. Sad and fatalistic, Johnson's moralising has a background of mysticism; with the avowal of the inevitable defeat which chance inflicts upon all wisdom, it offers positive precepts, a cure to alleviate the anguish of man's soul, if not his pain: the respect for the visionary truths of conscience, and the sacrifice of personal feeling, a quietistic resignation not irreconcilable with action.

Despite the force of moral reflection in *Rasselas,* there is still some literary weakness: the characters, while they are not all lacking in substance, are too obviously brought into being in order to satisfy some didactic purpose. It is therefore a relief to come to works where without any artificiality Johnson's thought bears directly upon its object, and expresses itself quite independently. His judgment of Shakespeare marks a date in the history of criticism. Here the value of his opinion does not only rest on the massive strength, the sure penetrating power of a perception which probes to the very core of Shakespeare's art, and touches, shows up its deep humanity, its sovereign realism; for this perception, admirably accurate as a whole, is not devoid of some errors of vision when it comes to details. Johnson sees Shakespeare through his own preconceived opinions and grievances; and the reserves which he believes himself justified in making are proof of this. His taste is not a little shocked by the dramatic daring of the author of *Macbeth* and *King Lear;* Shakespeare, in his opinion, succeeded much better in comedy than in tragedy. Another charge is that these plays are evidence of a shocking indifference to moral justice. Shakespeare's anachronisms are disconcerting, his rhetoric cold and forced; and lastly, he cannot resist the fatal attraction of one of those double meanings in words which reduce the pure-minded reader to despair. . . . In this way Johnson emphasises fairly well the points in which Shakespeare's æsthetics differ from those of his own time; and even if most of his remarks are justified, and on the other hand if his positive appreciation is wholly animated by a warm sympathy, it can be said that this judgment remains essentially dogmatic; in no way does it depart from the point of view of classicism.

But it broadens this point of view to a remarkable extent. Classical doctrine is renewed by a fruitful appeal to the resources of literary psychology. It is towards inner observation that Johnson reverts, in order to tackle and solve in an original and daring manner the tritest problems of dramatic art. By interweaving comedy and tragedy, did Shakespeare commit the most unpardonable of offences, as orthodox criticism would have us believe? Is not this mixed art, after all, in keeping with the varied character of all experience, and with the actual laws of attention? It is unpleasant in logic to be shifted from one tonality to another. Might it not be restful, in fact, for the needs of consciousness? Dryden had already sketched out an argument of this kind, but Johnson carries his analysis and demonstration still further.

It is therefore in the name of the concrete life of the mind that he answers the deductions of the rationalistic French critics. But he does not stop there; as if alarmed at his own audacity, and seeking to excuse himself, he attacks the rule of the three unities. When closely examined, in the light of experimental data, it fades away. Its origin is the fear of a disquietude of mind which does not exist; an imaginary fear, that has been forged by a psychology a priori. The unity of action alone is justified; those of time and place are the results of an abstract notion of theatrical illusion. Now, this illusion is never complete; were it so, it would destroy the very conditions of art. The fictitious changing from one place or from one time to another does not demand more from the spectator than that general good-will without which no dramatic performance can take place. Here once more, Dryden's hesitant intuition is improved upon; and the romantic theory of liberty finds itself wholly implicated.

This theory is to be felt everywhere like a hidden power, behind the secure positions to which Johnson's classicism clings. In the background of his ideas, one perceives a secret lassitude of artistic sensibility, the need for a vast and universal renovation. We find him praising with a hint of irony the perfection of a "regular and correct" writer; and describing the bright exuberance of Shakespeare in glowing terms, which reveal the attraction that unknown to himself such an ideal has for him. It is in rather an envious tone that he speaks of the ages of youthfulness and freshness, when the substance of literature is new, when it lives upon pure observation, and owes nothing yet to books; when further the laborious dissection of the human heart has not destroyed the first bloom of emotions. In this High Priest of the classical faith and of a rational art, sure signs evidence a yearning for another art, for another psychological tone; in his subconscious mind, he shares in the mental change taking place among his contemporaries.

The progress of the doctrine, the secret movement of a thought that is shifting towards the future, are less obvious in *The Lives of the Poets.* But these short compact memoirs are frequently little masterpieces.

Johnson was limited in his choice by the preferences of the publishers; he therefore accepts a perspective of literature which dates the rise of English poetry from Cowley. He approaches the task imposed upon him as a psychologist, and here again in a broad sense as a moralist, no less than as a critic. Beside the main figures, there pass before our eyes the minor ones, rhymesters of noble birth or penurious men of letters; and to each, with an equal conscientiousness, and sententious gravity tempered by humour, Johnson distributes praise and blame. His measure of literary merit is impartial; the claims of a duke fail to awe him. His attitude is firm, decided, and as it rests upon principles that are clearly conceived, it can in a sense be said to be dogmatic; but it does not exclude delicate differences, and tolerates the individual varieties of temperaments, even if it does not always show to all the same degree of sympathy. His judgment is not only formal, it is human; he appraises the significance of life at its full value, traces back the work to the man; and in this analysis, shows a divination, a tact, but also a certain Puritan narrowness. His mind is equipped with a kind of supple relativism, lying within a rigid framework of certitudes, which seem to us of to-day somewhat arbitrary. The critic, lastly, goes straight to the essential, seizes the kernel of ideas or of moral substance in the works of the mind, and bases his estimate upon this inner element.

Johnson therefore appreciates the poets from the standpoint of the moralist, first of all and properly speaking as the philosopher; he also appreciates them, in a certain measure, as the artist; he has a fine sense of the relations which form bears to content; he feels and judges form, in most cases, with felicity and sureness. No doubt, he attaches essential importance to construction, to harmony of tone, to transitions, to all the technique of classicism; but the sureness of his taste is made up of an accurate sense of other and more subtle elements; beside the fixed and certain qualities, which answer to his primary exigencies, he leaves a place to the charm, the evocative power, the music, the pure beauty of the verse or of the image. We find here instances of characterisation too exact, too delicately shaded, not to have been suggested by a creative intuition. This faculty, which makes Johnson a great critic, has its limits; his tolerance stops at certain audacities that are too new for him, while his taste is offended by certain innovations that are too personal. He is unjust in his criticism of Swift, whose harsh sweeping manner secretly worries him. His judgment of Gray and Collins is lacking in kindliness. A thick veil hides the future from his gaze, conceals the coming of Romanticism. But he has given more solid reality to the classical scale of merits, because he has founded it in the full perception of spiritual energies. And his remarks are written in a style of dense force, rich in formulæ, antithetic and often epigrammatic, but never to excess; a trifle solemn, stiff, oracular, but always saved from banality or turgidness by the essence of a mental distinction which suffuses all the movements of his thought.

This style, as always, but here more than ever, shows the man himself. Johnson usually handles a form that is too regular and balanced not to betray some rigidity in the inner mood from which it proceeds; the ideal model of even orderliness upon which he regulates the construction of his sentences reminds us of pulpit eloquence; and more deeply still, in his oppositions of terms and ideas, two by two, his constant parallelisms of expression, we find the latent action of the supremely active rhythm of elevated English prose, the rhythm of the Bible. But this oratorical development is frequently condensed in touches of vigour, in phrases that are brief and full of meaning, of a piercing sharpness; and one feels there much more than a mere verbal abundance, the wealth of an intellectual originality, a concentrated and purified experience of thought and of life. Humour arises from the mastery over itself with which this experience is realised and revealed; and from the supple liberty which permits the indirect expression of a concrete wisdom.

Johnson therefore is possessed of a faculty of rapid exteriorisation, of improvisation, that is often of greater value than the laboured moments of a sustained style. It is in this way that he has perhaps put the best of himself into his talk. His whimsical remarks, collected by Boswell, are scarcely ever purely paradoxical, but are usually sudden intuitions, luminous as flashes. They do not throw light upon everything; indeed many realities remain as it were impervious to them; and they have their own limitations. Yet within these limitations, they are creative. And the accent of a personality that is too complex not to remain spontaneous and full-flavoured, too lucid not to be conscious of its individual prepossessions, not to accept them and play with them in a mood of secret complacency, introduces into all his remarks an inimitable quality, which in a still better manner than his works, explains his prestige and the radiating force of his influence.

One does not get to know or to understand Johnson if one does not look for the direct echo of his voice and of his reaction to things in the accounts of his travels, either in the form of the diary of his tour in Scotland, which he himself has narrated, or in the relation of it which Boswell has left us under another title; or again if one does not read the minute, luxuriant, diffuse biography in which Boswell brings his doctoral friend to life again, and makes him live and speak, and this with an impassioned effacement of self, a sincerity of admiration at the same time discriminating, a sympathy which does not involve any abdication of judgment, all of which reveal his own figure just as that of his hero, and have assured him the immortality of a satellite in the effulgence of a star.

The influence of Johnson has been social and moral just as much as literary. He has definitively fixed the type of the modern man of letters; and better even than Pope, has given him the dignity of independence. His famous letter to Lord Chesterfield proclaims the close of the age of patrons. A personal authority on literature and manners, a critic of standing, he contributes in maintaining order and stability through a period that is secretly in the throes of a vast transition already begun. His decrees maintain and justify the valuations of the past, even if they be prompted by new reasons; he is therefore a reformer in nothing. Did he retard the evolution of literature? One cannot positively say so. The forces which are holding it back at this time are greater than the individuals themselves; in the conservative quality of his moral and middle-class instinct, Johnson is a product just as much as he is a cause.

6. The Poets of Classical Tradition.—Posterity has come to look upon Johnson as the head of a school. But his magisterial authority was above all retrospective: he consecrated the glories of the past. In his connection with the writers of his time, he rather exerted a diffuse action, than played the part of an inspirer and guide. It is in vain that one looks around him for his school of poetry: none such exists.

The reason is that life is now tending to abandon the purely classical forms of verse. Classicism has become a set of rules, receipts and devices; it may have the entire assent of critical faculties and enlightened taste: yet, it no longer voices the instincts of creative genius. The impulse which still carries English literature forward during the first decades of the century exhausts itself by degrees in the field of poetry. One hardly encounters now any great names or any great works.

The age of Johnson, however, has its poets; but almost all of them who give proof of personal talent belong to another psychological temperament, and their classicism is modified by an inner change. Their inspiration flows from other sources. Through the feelings which prompt their lines, they reveal the depth of a transition in progress, even if the prestige of classical form still sways them, and if expression with them does not show the same renewal.

In the lineage itself of an integral classicism, we only find poets of second- or third-class merit. The "eclogues" of Lord Lyttelton,[1] and his circumstantial verse, are the docile exercises of an imitator of Pope; the works of his maturity strike a rather different note. John Armstrong[2] shows an inverse development, for while his poem, *Winter*, written in 1725, reveals a rather original vigour, his *Art of Preserving Health* (1744) keeps, so to say, the promise of its claim. The case is more simple with Matthew Green,[1] Nathaniel Cotton,[2] Richard Glover[3] and James Grainger.[4] And if Mark Akenside[5] did not show, through his consciousness of the power of imagination, some affinity with one of the aspects of the psychological rebirth, one would be tempted to rank him among the most belated representatives of an exhausted inspiration, so much is his language encumbered with laboured artifice.[6]

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[1] 1709–73; *The Progress of Love*, in 4 Eclogues (Chalmers, *English Poets*, vol. xiv.).

[2] 1709–79; *Poems*, Chalmers, vol. xvi.

These poets reveal in different degrees, and under various aspects, a similar impoverishment of inspiration. The art of writing in verse becomes an end in itself, and is indulged in quite independently of any emotive impulse. Belonging to pure intellect, this poetry finds its nutriment in imitation, witticisms, conventional gallantry, the teaching of facts, the development of abstract themes. It is descriptive, witty or didactic. The instrument it handles is for the most part the heroic couplet, the breaks and flow of which offer an unconquerably monotonous regularity; or, as in the case of Glover and Armstrong, a blank verse puffed out with a false eloquence by a rhetoric that is wholly verbal. Subjects such as *The Art of Preserving Health* or *The Sugar-Cane* suffice to indicate the artistic plane in which these writers deliberately place themselves. . . .

The literature of intellectuality is not dead. But classicism from now onwards seeks its natural expression rather in the domain of prose. It is the novel, or the philosophical treatise, that enables it to justify through outstanding works the doctrinal authority of which it jealously preserves the privilege. The expression of pure ideas continues to furnish it with the opportunity for finely reclaiming itself; and in the studies of manners, realism affords it the means to grow richer by turning its principle of truth to new uses.

To be consulted: Barbeau, *Une Ville d'Eaux au XVIIIe Siècle; La Société Elégante et Littéraire à Bath*, etc., 1904; Bailey, *Dr. Johnson and His Circle*, 1913; Boswell, *Life of Johnson;* idem, *Selections*, ed. by Chapman, 1919; *Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. x. chaps. vii. viii.; Digeon, *Les Romans de Fielding*, 1923; Johnson, *Lives of the Poets*, 1781 (ed. by Hill, 1906); Seccombe, *The Age of Johnson*, 1900; Millar, *The Mid-Eighteenth Century*, 1902; Lecky, *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, 12th edition, 1899; Gosse, *History of Eighteenth Century Literature*, 1889; Leslie Stephen, *English Literature and Society in the Eighteenth Century*, 1904; Tinker, *The Salon and English Letters*, 1915.

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[1] 1696–1737; *The Spleen*, 1737.

[2] 1705–1788; *Poems*, Chalmers, vol. xviii.

[3] 1712–1785; *Leonidas*, 1737; *London, or the Progress of Commerce*, 1739; etc.; *Poems*, Chalmers, vol. xvii.

[4] 1721?–1766; *The Sugar-Cane*, 1764.

[5] 1721–1770; *The Pleasures of Imagination*, 1744; Chalmers, vol. xiv.

[6] Henry Brooke, a transitional figure in literature (see further, Book IV. chap. ii. sect. 3), is better known as a novelist; his verse is after the pattern of the old school (*The Universal Beauty*, 1735).

CHAPTER II

THE POETRY OF SENTIMENT

1. **Transitional Poets: Akenside, Falconer, etc.**—The eighteenth century in its central body is traversed by a development in poetry, the stages of which mark the progressive advent of a new inspiration. Just as the invasion of sentimentalism transforms the moral life, so the literature, and particularly the poetry, are transformed by the gradual appearance of themes based on sentiment, which come to take their place beside the classical motives.

This growth is a movement emanating from within. It modifies the soul of poetry before modifying its body; it does not reveal itself immediately, or regularly, or evenly, in the verse and the style. As there is always a certain connection between the matter and the manner, this change ends by making itself felt; but with more or less rapidity, more or less accuracy. For such connections are supple, and have nothing that might be termed imperiously binding; their elasticity permits of delays, adaptations and compromises. In fact, the evolution in language and in verse follows at a distance the one effected in inspiration, and at a pace that varies according to all individual accidents. On the whole, and despite numerous signs, some noteworthy initiatives, and a partial effort towards rejuvenation, the poetry of sentiment continues to express itself in classical forms. And we find in it the greatest variety of expressions. A certain intimate community of character is hidden beneath the most striking differences in general movement, literary kinds, subjects and language.

This mass of writers and works, however, constitutes a whole, and should be studied from the aspect of its unity; at least if it be true that, even when dealing with poetry, literary history must choose its guiding lines and build up its framework according to spiritual affinities, rather than by analogies of form.

From the mental point of view, as from that of form, the diversity in temperaments does not lend itself to a rigorous and simple classification. The poets of sentiment are not parted from the classical poets by any clear line. The two domains overlap; or rather, there exists between them quite an intermediary zone; and there we find a progressive series of mixed personalities, who form the transition from one group to the other.

From the third to the eighth decade of the century, a great number of authors are writing in verse from impulses that are for the most part rational, but in which there is an admixture, variously proportioned, of those of the new spirit. Sentiment does not become in a moment, or without a struggle, for each person any more than for the whole society, the dominant element of life and thought. Unconscious imitation, suggestion, the influence of the surroundings, also play their part in suffusing with an emotional tone natures that were spontaneously immune from it. Thus it is that we witness in the case of several writers infiltrations of sentimentalism, which gradually alter the primitive singleness of their inner being. And whenever these moral changes are not decisive, they result in divided inspirations, which must be looked upon and classed as such.

The poets who show these hesitations are most often of mediocre quality;

they offer an open field to contradictory influences, without being able to come to a decision or make a choice. Yet they have the interest of mediocre writers, in whom are shown with greater clearness the changes in course of development. Such is Lord Lyttelton, who from his artificial pastorals and frigid light pieces passes, towards the end of his life, to a sincere elegiac sentiment in a poem of personal effusion (*Monody,* etc.). Such also James Grainger, the author of *The Sugar-Cane,* the least readable among the technical poems, of an age fertile in errors of a similar nature, and who, writing an *Ode on Solitude,* gives expression very awkwardly, but not without truth, and in the midst of allegorical trash, to the confused emotion of a very romantic melancholy. Such again Akenside,[1] whose work is interesting in many respects. His main inspiration, and the form in which he vests it, are still of a very mediocre pseudo-classicism; but through his psychological curiosity, associated with ethical preoccupations, through his clear view of what the human soul can gain by appropriating the grandeur and beauty of Nature, as also through the gravity, often Miltonian, of his language and blank verse, he might be termed a predecessor of Wordsworth. Despite the intellectualism of the thought, the abstract nature of the style, a certain idealistic emotion at such times animates his poem, and imparts to it the value of a sign and a preparation of the future.

William Falconer[2] is still another transition poet, and of a very curious type. His mind is haunted by classical memories; his heroes have Greek names; his style aims at nobleness by way of generality; whilst his language is strewn with naval terms, he does his best to drown them in the purest jargon of the fashionable poetic diction. But all this artificiality is bathed in a diffuse sentimentalism; and, above all, it is broken through from time to time by a vigorous and sincere element of tragedy, a direct sense of the cruel realities of the sea and of death. A source of poetry refreshed through contact with genuine experience, and sensation, tries in vain to come to the surface from beneath a passive observance of literary conventions.—Even in William Whitehead,[3] at a far advanced date in the century, one can find the persisting trace of the examples set by Pope, the intentions and the devices of a decadent classicism, unreadable "Odes"; and at the same time, an elegiac sweetness and grace, a true feeling for landscape; while in one of his poems, *The Enthusiast,* are accents which convey with singular force all the rapture of solitude and of natural scenery.

Very many would be the examples of the same kind, if it were of any advantage to linger over them. Most of these poets owe the secret and partial change of their instincts to the moral transformation of the century, the rhythm of which they unconsciously follow, and to the influence of less timid writers. In their works we catch the echoes of Thomson, Young, Collins, Gray, and of all that poetic group with whom inspiration is clearly enough penetrated by the new spirit for one to be able to place it, unhesitatingly, on the direct road of the future.

2. Nature; Thomson, Dyer.—The growth of the poetry of sentiment proceeds by successive advances. Nothing is richer than emotion as a motive of poetry; in a sense, it constitutes the normal and necessary source of all rhythmic language. What is recommencing, therefore, is not a particular kind, but all the diversity of poetry itself.

No doubt, the eighteenth century will be far from exhausting this whole range. On account of the effect of social restraint, which has a retarding influence upon moral evolution, it will give as yet only a sober sketch of its possibilities. It will be left to the following century to allow sentimental effusion all its intensity and freedom, and to decisively harmonise form with a renewed inspiration. But already we are shown with sufficient clearness the main lines along which this inspiration will work. And the successive appearance of these lines, as revealed by exact chronology, enables us to perceive without too much artifice a coherent order of development.

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[1] For these three poets, see the end of the preceding chapter.

[2] 1732–69; *The Shipwreck,* 1762; *Poems,* Chalmers, vol. xiv.

[3] 1715–85; *Poems,* Chalmers, vols. xvi. and xvii.

The first element which comes into prominence is the emotional theme of Nature. The instinctive naturalism of the English mind was never completely neutralised by classical influences. The vigorous reviviscence of this tendency well before the middle of the century is therefore in itself nothing of a surprise. It must also be made clear that at its source this vein is less properly sentimental than it is sensitive. It represents more easily a continuation of classicism than will the purer emotions, freer from all material support, that will develop shortly after.

From a certain point of view, the feeling for Nature with Thomson[1] springs from that realism of concrete description which is an essential element of classical art and which already, even with the masters of the school, was sometimes tinged by a fond affection for natural scenery. Thomson's inspiration is a realism that has blossomed out into a keen, coloured and glowing sensation. This ardour of sensuous perception is an undoubted originality in itself; besides, it is accompanied by a general tone of deeply moved sensibility. But we are here only in the rather exterior regions of the poetry of sentiment; and this exteriority might not be unconnected with the fact that form, with Thomson, is still very closely allied to the intentions and devices of classicism.

His features are therefore above all mixed. In the light of his work as of his life, we find two men in him. The one is an amiable epicurean, care-free, the friend of easy leisure, who through his mind, tastes and character was very readily won over to the cult of ancient beauty and of traditional literary models. The other bears the stamp of an ecclesiastic education, more severe and moralising; religiously inclined, and fond also of sentiment. Judged by certain traits, if the first Thomson is in many ways at one with Pope, the second is already in keeping with Richardson. And it is the second, no doubt, who is better in agreement with the social and psychological movement in which the line of literary progression is dimly outlined.

It seems temptingly simple to connect the classical elements in the work of Thomson with the first group of tendencies, and the elements of transition with the second. Such an interpretation would not be altogether wrong, but things are not so clear-cut. What we can distinguish as the most certain feature of Thomson's originality—the sense of the physical world, the rich perception of Nature—is at once made up of the two temperaments which he unites in himself, and the distinction of which is, to say the truth, wholly abstract.

The scenery of the seasons, as Thomson paints it, is made up of still general touches; a mind guided by literary memories, by time-consecrated models, constructs its main framework. It is the course of the sun through the signs of the zodiac which sets moving this changing sequence; the Muse presides over all the transitions; mythology is the background of the modern and real horizon in which the festivities or the sorrows of Heaven and Earth unfold themselves, in all their grandeur and brilliance. The scenes of country life irresistibly assume the style of typical and Vergilian episodes; the spirit of the *Georgics* puts them together and evolves them. This classical atmosphere is more distinctly felt in a language that is scholarly, strewn with Latinisms, where the epithet has often a character of conventional banality, and from which poetic diction is by no means absent. Thomson describes Nature by educing from the multiplicity of facts the forms to which they can be reduced, and which enable the mind to classify them. The seasons are the most general of these forms; the aspects of each season, the activities associated with them, are others. His inspiration of a generalising and didactic trend remains in so far intellectual; and the inner quality of his style appears in the constant employment of the definite article (not necessary for present use), which suggests the influence of French syntax, and gives to the poetry as to the prose of this epoch the colour of a literature written under the constant stimulus of a search after universality of statement.

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[1] James Thomson, born in 1700, in the south of Scotland, was the son of a minister and studied at Edinburgh; renouncing an ecclesiastical career, he journeyed to London in 1725, earned his living by teaching, and published *Winter* in 1726; then came *Summer* (1727), *Spring* (1728) and *Autumn*, which completed the *Seasons*, in 1730. Three years later, he received a sinecure, then a pension which allowed him to finish a political poem, *Liberty* (1736), to settle at Richmond not far from Pope, and there to prepare, perhaps with the latter's guidance, a revised edition of the *Seasons* (1744). Shortly after his last work, *The Castle of Indolence*, he died (1748). He was also the author of several tragedies (see Book II. chap. iv. sect. 4). *Poetical Works*, ed. by Tovey, 1897; *Seasons* and *Castle of Indolence*, ed. by Robertson, 1891. See Saint-Lambert, *Les Saisons*, 1785; L. Morel, *James Thomson*, 1895; G. C. Macaulay, *Thomson* (English Men of Letters), 1908; M. Reynolds, *The Treatment of Nature in English Poetry between Pope and Wordsworth*, 1912.

But as against the abstraction of the central thought, we have the particular value of the images and sensations evoked. Built up on a need for truth, classicism contained within itself the very principle of realism; but the almost exclusive preoccupation of general truths kept its effort away from the wealth of reality. With Thomson, classical art opens itself broadly to the concrete; and immediately it receives a new vitality from this contact.

The reason is that the intelligence is no longer exclusively called upon to receive this inrush of sensations, to organise them, distribute them, despoil them of their characteristic element; the realism of Thomson is of a superior poetic fecundity, because it is the spontaneous exercise of a sensitive temperament, capable of strong and delicate impressions, trained from an early hour in the discriminations and enjoyments of the eye and ear and touch. The voluptuous epicurean whose instincts harmonise so well, in other respects, with a traditional culture and a humanistic inspiration, has been an unconscious innovator because he has not forgotten, as he wrote, that he had senses. By loading his verse with all their joys, he introduced into a rational and jejune art a complexity and a luxuriance foreign to its usual effects.

It is therefore difficult to believe that the coloured intensity of sensation, in the *Seasons,* would have developed with this tranquil audacity, had not other tendencies intervened to favour it. The wealth of concrete description is strengthened by a whole group of impulses of the emotional order. Here it is, to speak properly, that the feeling for Nature appears. It springs from the diffuse sentimentalism which, in the case of Thomson, is bound up with his moralising temperament, religious, patriotic, and in full sympathy with the instincts of the middle classes. Thus the minute attention with which the charm of the English countryside is appreciated and depicted appears as it were animated by an inner ardour, strong enough to become a dominant passion of the soul, and to gather all its desires around itself.

But it is a tempered passion, without anything violent or exalted; a sort of fond complacency, that includes many elements destined to develop with the progress of the century: the taste for pure and peaceful emotions, the calm rapture called forth by verdant sites, the relaxing of body and mind, the soothing sense reaped from the sight of innocent, idyllic simplicity; the half-sincere preference for a primitive, upright and pious life, far removed from the overheated artificiality of towns. Thomson's feeling for Nature has already something religious about it, just as it has something national;

but while it is conscious of its social and philosophic prepossessions, it does not as yet uphold them with the uncompromising zeal of a Rousseau.

Its success is elsewhere, in the notation of what it sees and feels. To pass from the pastorals of Pope, or from *Windsor Forest,* to the *Seasons,* is to pass from too expert a flute, or from a pompously sylvan lyre, to an arranged but harmoniously sweet concert of all the voices of fields and woods and hills. No doubt, it will happen that the description is more conscientiously precise than poetic. But a decisive step has been taken towards the discovery of a sensible world then forgotten, if not unknown.

The episodes, anecdotes and moralising reflections fade from our memory; what remains is a series of visions, of a delightful freshness and penetrating charm. The poetry of nature is actually there in its blooming fullness, for the first time in many years. It springs, first and foremost, from exactitude. Its range is certainly not complete; it lacks its grandest, wildest, most mystical notes. However, it would be wrong to look upon Thomson as a Dutch painter of fat pastures and jolly farm-houses, whose outlook is limited by an ideal of comfortable sanity. The landscape he describes is indeed that which he could love and observe in the south of Scotland or in the neighbourhood of London; the sky and the ground in his pictures are familiar and reassuring; if he leaves this well-known domain for the high mountain, the pole or the desert, the effort is immediately perceptible. But within the limits of his experience, he was able to feel, and knew how to convey, a remarkable vivacity of character. The notes of vernal sweetness, and of pensive autumnal beauty, are those best suited to the tone of his temperament; and he expresses the rapture of the ones, as the melancholy of the others, with an intensity of feeling, a fullness of emotion, that will be surpassed only by Romanticism at the zenith of its power.

It is towards Romanticism, indeed, that this work is unwittingly verging, however immune it may be from all revolutionary intent. The hymn which closes the *Seasons* makes one think of Coleridge. Their form even is not entirely cast in the classical mould. Out of a desire to react against an over-summary opinion, one has perhaps, in the opposite sense, too much connected Thomson with the past. However artificial his language, it none the less obtains effects of light and sonority which restore to literature resources of art neglected for several generations. His search for imitative harmony is carried to a sort of impressionism. And to the cult of Pope, he has added that of Milton and Spenser.

It would be wrong to think that at the end of the seventeenth century, and in the beginning of the eighteenth, these masters were ignored. The broadest minds of the time preserved a veneration for them, which they reconciled very well with classical principles. But it was Thomson's desire to borrow from the strong solemn beauties of *Paradise Lost,* a religious, national and poetic classicism; he wanted to model his blank verse on that of Milton. His talent of a soft happy temper did not lend itself to the powerful austere orchestration of that writer; his attempt, however, was only half an error. He borrowed from Milton, over and above his Latinisms, something of his nobleness; and the versification of the *Seasons* is of a very creditable quality; its tones, in an age swayed by the imperious rule of the rhymed couplet, ring with a strength, a liberty, a suppleness, the tradition of which had been lost.

There are traces in the *Seasons* of the influence of Spenser; but it is in *The Castle of Indolence* that it displays its fecundity. This unequal poem, the edifying intention of which scarcely corresponds with its artistic truth, is perhaps the most successful imitation in English literature; and in certain respects it is better than an imitation. Here Thomson gives vent to all his somnolent epicurean tastes more than he himself wanted to, and symbolises with charming felicity the soul's succumbing to the pleasures of a care-free nature. The Spenserian stanza, which he strews with archaisms at times quite fanciful, but animates with a generally very correct movement, seems as if it had been made for the theme to which it is here applied; its richness, its ample musical unfolding, suit both the temperament of Thomson, and the subject. No more evocative poem was written in the eighteenth century.

Thomson had given voice to deep aspirations, which many shared; he restored Nature to one of the first places among the subjects of poetry, and to a place from which she was never to be dislodged. He had immediately a following, and found imitators, while his diffuse action is to be felt everywhere.

Dyer[1] is rather his rival than his disciple. A very short interval separates the first of the *Seasons* from *Grongar Hill.*

It is through this poem that he has retained a place in the memory of the cultivated public. *The Ruins of Rome* is an ambitious declamation, in which the blank verse has at times a vigour of touch. *The Fleece,* a curious work, has more than one kind of interest, but it is almost devoid of poetic merit; on the other hand, no text allows one to appreciate better the importance of the national spirit in the literature of middle-class inspiration during the eighteenth century. Sentimentalism, and fondness in description, are here restrained by a dominant theme, at once technical and moral: the woollen industry, its material, its working, its markets, and the pride taken in the prosperity which it supports, all form an admirable subject for a social study, but not for a poem in four books. Dyer is here in the plane of purely didactic classicism; and the form of his work, with its very artificial quality, suffers thereby.

By the side of these errors, *Grongar Hill* is a wonderful little thing, not without a few blemishes. Here one can take stock of the silent progress made since Denham, and then Pope, had treated analogous themes. The contemplation of the landscape assumes the dreaminess of meditation; the perspective, reflected in a sensibility, and no longer in a curious and architectural intelligence, wraps itself in poetry; the sense of vagueness allows a mystery to float over it, while an eye better trained in deciphering the aspects of things gives to the detail—to each kind of tree for example—all its preciseness. And the short, light rhythm of Milton's descriptive poems introduces a touch of fluidity into a delicately evocative whole.

Among the direct heirs of Thomson, one might mention David Mallet,[2] who applies the plan of the *Seasons* to the diverse aspects of a day; with a less fine, less polished art, he has just as sincere a feeling for Nature, and his *Winter's Day* is an elegiac effusion of striking sentiment, beneath a conventional form. One might also mention William Somerville,[3] a country gentleman, whose blank verse recalls that of the *Seasons,* with less suppleness, and to whom Nature is above all the theatre for hunting feats.

It is through the resemblance of the metric instrument that we can here recognise the action of Thomson. Elsewhere, less easily seen, it can still be felt; in broadening circles, it henceforth impregnates the whole domain of descriptive poetry. Underneath the vogue of the unrhymed line, one catches in its progress this wave of influence, awakening a latent susceptibility to the emotions which have their source in the physical universe.

[1] John Dyer, born in Wales about 1700, the son of a lawyer, began as a painter, exploring as a wandering artist his native country, where he wrote *Grongar Hill* (1726); after a sojourn in Italy he published *The Ruins of Rome* (1740); took orders, led the life of a rural cleric, published in 1757 *The Fleece,* and died in 1758. *Poems,* Chalmers, vol. xiii.

[2] 1705?–1765; *The Excursion,* 1728.

[3] 1675–1742; *The Chase,* 1735.

3. Night, Death; Young, etc.—Some aspects of Nature harmonise with painful emotions; a landscape can be a symbol, just as much as a suggestion, of sadness. The poetical pleasure of experiencing this suggestion shades off, by an easy transition, into the paradoxical voluptuousness of a sorrow that is indulged in for its own sake. The poets of Nature, from the first, showed themselves keenly desirous of tender emotions. Already in the opening stages of its new vogue the cult of feeling reaches this stage of psychological inversion—an inversion so constant that it assumes normality—in which a joy is extracted from suffering. The fond search for a mournful kind of pathos soon appears among the essential themes which are helping to swell the poetry of sentiment; after the poets of the countryside, and in close accord with them, appear those who draw their inspiration from night, death and melancholy.

The origin of this theme is by no means simple. It arises from the need of feeling, which is developing, and therefore corresponds with a kind of transposed sensuality. But it has neither the aspect, nor the inner realisation of itself, that the perverted taste for an imaginary emotion would imply. It knows itself, and perceives itself, as the orthodox stirring of a pious soul. It associates itself with the revival of religious and moral preoccupations. Midnight thoughts, the obsession of the grave, the effusions of intimate grief and the pleasure of shedding tears, are directly connected through their innermost origins with the renascence of the Puritan spirit, which is favoured by the rise of the middle class. Puritanism had for long lived on sombre, tortured visions; it retains its colour, even if it mitigates its austerity in a way dangerous to itself, when consciously cultivating tragic thrills or a sadness that has its delights.

By virtue of his wide influence in literature, Young is the central figure of this group of poets; the success of his work popularised a theme, and spread its fascination throughout all Europe, where a sympathetic echo is awakened and passes among the nations which are being prepared by an inner movement for Romanticism. In so far as melancholy is bound up with the feeling for Nature, he is not an innovator. The renewed emotion to which Thomson had given the first frank expression was tending as if by an irresistible affinity towards this shade of sentiment; *Autumn* was already the most seductive of the *Seasons.* The night motive had been already sketched by Lady Winchelsea (*Nocturnal Reverie*) and Parnell (*Night Piece on Death*). Two years before the publication of the *Night Thoughts,* Joseph Warton,[1] destined with his brother Thomas to shake the critical dogmatism upon which classicism rested,[2] wrote an awkward, naïve poem, commonplace in form, but raised by a rough and sincere inspiration, *The Enthusiast, or the Lover of Nature.* The point at which Thomson had stopped is now passed; love and desire soar impetuously towards the great stretches of wild nature, and a whole programme of poetic revival shapes itself out through the liberty accorded to the exaltation of feeling. And this rapture draws its sustenance from dramatic visions, from desolate moors where grow the yew and the sombre juniper tree; night, solitude and meditation throw a funereal harmony over this rugged setting. The spirit of Milton's *Penseroso,* and not that of the *Allegro,* gives the tone to all this landscape literature of the eighteenth century.

But Young[3] is at the source itself of the current of religious melancholy associated with problems of death and destiny; or at least, at the source of the literature which derives into secretly complacent expressions forces of energy a Puritanism of long standing would use up in spiritual torments and in acts of will.[1]

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[1] 1722–1800; *Poems, Chalmers,* vol. xviii.

[2] See below, Book IV. chap. i. sect. 4.

[3] Edward Young, born in 1683, in Hampshire, was the son of a cleric, studied at Oxford, threw in his lot with the Duke of Wharton, wrote tragedies (see Book II. chap. iv. sect. 4), satires, which preceded those of Pope (*The Love of Fame, The Universal Passion,* 1725–28), took orders (1727), and his various aims having more or less fallen through, he was appointed to the modest living of Welwyn, where he ended his days in the expectation of a Bishopric which never came. He had married the daughter of

It is impossible not to connect this idea of conscious artistic exploitation, of half-insincerity, with the display of pessimistic sensibility which has given Young his unique place in English poetry. Only a narrow criticism, it is true, can stringently demand from the writer an explanation of all his moods, can search in his life for the actual counterpart and so to speak the justification of each sob; the artist's personality is a world apart, where experience and imagination commingle according to independent laws. The penetrating study in which George Eliot contrasts the Christian detachment of the *Night Thoughts* and the interested worldliness of their author only discloses a secret weakness at the cost of some malignity. But it is none the less interesting to see, at the fountain-head of the Romanticism of grief, the artifice of an idealised and simplified attitude creating a kind of relative deception, which will be for Romanticism a vice analogous to that which for the classicists was the fictitious suppression of personality.

Self-expression with Thomson was still something discreet and indirect; with Young, self comes into the foreground. His work represents the real beginning of the literature of sensibility. Necessarily subjective in principle, it tends with all its might to bring about the overthrow of the barriers of intellectuality, measure, and order, as well as the general self-effacement, by which classicism limited, repressed and transposed the troubled, impatient flow of the inner life.

Young provides an outlet for this tumultuous tide. But he does not let it pour forth freely. Just as much as with Thomson, his is a double temperament, which by culture is bound up with tradition, at the same time as instinct inclines it towards the future. The education of his art has been exclusively classical; the whole of his work belongs to the forms and spirit of the age of Pope. The powerful initiative of the *Night Thoughts* is wholly psychological by nature; the language, subservient to rules, is in no way renovated. The signs of a weakening inspiration, of a style that is cut off from its vital roots, the abstraction, the false and merely verbal intensity, come to spoil at every minute his most vigorous accents. An imperious discipline weighs upon his expression, contracting it, concentrating it, and giving to his poem an extreme and often obscure terseness; while on the other hand the discontinuity of thought is seen in the absence of any plan, and produces incessantly the impression of jerkiness, of themes taken up again, and of a broken line of development.

The *Night Thoughts* are a long meditation in nine cantos. Three successive bereavements have darkened the poet's soul; the nocturnal hours are in keeping with his sorrow; pensive and alone he abandons himself to the reflections it suggests; and it is a full treatise on life, death and immortality which thus issues from a personal emotion, displayed as it is beneath a light veil of reticence; the modesty of private life is still too strong, and so fictitious names serve to design those who died. The development is more than didactic; it is controversial. The inconstancy and illusion of human happiness, the

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the Duke of Lichfield; a series of family bereavements, together with the death of his wife, inspired *The Complaint*, or *Night Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality* (1742–45), the success of which was very great. He died in 1765. His *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1759) make very liberal allowance for the originality of genius against rules. *Poetical Works*, Aldine Edn., 1858. See G. Eliot, *Essays*, 1884; J. Texte, *Rousseau et le Cosmopolitisme Littéraire*, 1895; W. Thomas, *Le Poète Ed. Young*, 1901.

[1] The fact must not be overlooked, however, that the success of *Pamela* in 1740 had popularised another expression of Puritan pathos. (See below, chap. iii. sect. 2.)

illogicalness of infidelity, the fecund certitudes of faith, such are the very orthodox doctrines that Young demonstrates with untiring zeal. An imaginary interlocutor lends a surface animation to his monologue. Through this rather pale personage, who seems to represent the spirit of the century, it is against the error of moral flippancy that Young raises the protestation of experience and good sense; and it is in the name of Reason that he upholds a rational thesis. The departed are evoked, one after another; a fund of bitterness felt everywhere confirms the sincerity of the Christian pessimism which is expressed; the lyrical setting of night and death is never allowed to be forgotten; but the poem has only at moments the character of an effusion; it is a series of religious commonplaces and philosophical debates.

In this way it belongs to the family of reasoned arguments in verse which classicism extolled, and so differs in no way by its nature from Pope's *Essay on Man.* The wholly intellectual aridness of the discussion is not redeemed by the utilitarian quality, at bottom prosaic, of the ethics taught; it is increased by a language that is most often abstract, an elliptical syntax, and an awkwardness of expression. The nervous condensation alone of the idea sustains the interest through the impression of mental energy which it continually creates, and the very effort that it demands from the reader.

And yet, this very classical work has drawn to itself, absorbed, crystallised, all the aspirations after a vague Romanticism of sentiment which were floating in the consciousness of the age; it was a leaven to the fermenting revolution in literature. This influence it owes to the powerful suggestion of grief and mystery which it potentially contains, and which it represses for the most part, but allows to expand and operate in brief moments of escape. It opens up on the material night of the physical world, on the darkness that enshrouds destiny, on the mysterious Beyond, perspectives that have all the profoundness of Christianity. A Miltonian sublimity raises it at times as if on a sudden spread of wing. An age that was weary of optimism and reason was attracted by the strange sweetness of despair, but its principles still forbade the full indulgence of these delights; once bound up with the examination of the reasons for believing, crowned by the hope of salvation, this dangerous source of joy acquired an innocence, and became even praiseworthy; such is the chief cause of Young's success. The faith passively practised by indolent minds contained within it the power to move, to communicate tragic thrills; to Young it was given to actualise and spread the contagion of these imaginative stirrings. He was not a creator, but an eloquent populariser; and has his place among religious orators.

That is to say, he is not only a rhetorician. The communicative virtue of his emotion is made up of an undeniable sincerity. Whatever the inspiration of the *Night Thoughts,* or even their form, may have in the way of strong and new poetry, it is due to the faculty of transposing abstract ideas into images; and the transposition is only rendered possible, here as elsewhere, by passionate feeling. The images thus invented are not original; they were not at that date, and they are infinitely less so to-day. The exterior setting of night, death and the tomb was already the common stock of religious writers; but profane literature has since made it banal. Still it cannot be denied that Young handles it in a personal way; he has a gift of ample, cosmic vision; unforeseen associations of terms, short striking turns of style that usually work themselves out into formulæ and proverbs, if not enigmas, but which also at times flash the most vivid illuminations upon the reader. And his line, jerky and stiff as it is, has an energy of touch, and sharp breaks of a powerful effectiveness.

There is scarcely any landscape work in the *Night Thoughts;* Nature is limited to a central setting, and some comparisons. But because of the affinity of the inner sentiment, Young's influence was immediately confounded with that of the descriptive poets. The set of romantic themes which is now being created is henceforth enlarged by nocturnal meditation and by pessimistic or religious melancholy, which associate themselves with stirring picturesque visions. Very extensive on the Continent, this action is to be felt in England, with all those whose temperament is not rebellious to the sensibility that is awakening.

The immediate echo of the *Night Thoughts* is to be heard in Blair,[1] whose poem offers the same commonplace ideas, an expression at times no less vigorous, together with the signs of a Puritan gravity that is more simple and less mixed with philosophical pretensions; and that already, in a naïve way, intensifies the use of the outer means destined to arouse funereal terrors. In a declamatory prose, and one which did not seem such to countless readers, James Hervey[2] also gives expression to identical emotions and thoughts; despite the difference of the form he adopts, he cannot be separated from this literary group.

With other writers, the particular theme with which Young is definitely associated is decidedly in the foreground, although it is not the dominant inspiration. Of such is Thomas Warton,[3] whose early poem translates in an impetuous language the fusion which a flight of sensibility achieves between the "pleasures" of Nature and those of "melancholy."

One could further connect with this group the expressions of a poetry of religious sentiment verging, either towards mysticism, as in John Byrom,[4] the disciple of Law, who wrote a "poetical essay" in praise of "enthusiasm"; or towards an instinctive symbolism, as in Christopher Smart,[5] whose *Song to David* is a strange masterpiece, of a striking and somewhat disturbing imaginative intensity, with moments of ecstatic ardour, of passionate naïveness, that make one think of Blake; or again, the Scottish talent of John Logan,[6] whose lyricism, of short breath but sincere feeling, adds variations to a common background of elegiac melancholy, and with whom this spontaneity at times creates accents of a relatively simpler language.[7]

4. Imagination: the Past, Ruins.—After sentiment has interwoven itself with the Nature of everyday surroundings, then with the sombre dramatic aspects of human destiny as well as of landscape, it is attracted towards the objects that affect, not the senses directly, but imagination through these. The development of imaginative perception is a necessary stage in the very progress of sensibility. The mental images suggested by concrete stimuli are a source of powerful and fecund emotion, and the need to feel is very quickly led to put it to contribution. The deepest stirrings of the soul are those which it creates out of its own substance.

The objects capable of awakening these inner reactions are above all those which possess an implicit eloquence; the signs, or symbols, of an absent reality. Among these are the relics of the Past—monuments, legends, works of art. On the other hand, it happens that the Past has a force of attraction in itself; it then can satisfy the longing of a consciousness that is ill-satisfied with the Present. A period of psychological transition will necessarily reveal this character. The rebirth of sentiment springs from an instinctive desire for renovation and moral refreshment; it tends to re-exercise spiritual faculties that have been slumbering. The obscure belief of having formerly experienced their constant and beneficial activity is an essential element of the knowledge that this age has of itself. The intuition on the one hand of an impoverishment of the national soul, brought about by a century of exclusive rationalism, and on the other, of the necessity to return to former modes of being, the actual memory of which still pulsates and throbs in the life of these times, such is the general condition of English sensibility which is daily becoming more pronounced, and the progress of which is the main support of the change in literature.

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[1] Robert Blair, 1699–1746; *The Grave*, 1743; *Poems*, Chalmers, vol. xv.

[2] James Hervey, 1714–58; *His Meditations among the Tombs*, 1745–47, reached the 25th edn. before the end of the century.

[3] 1728–90; *The Pleasures of Melancholy*, written in 1745, published in 1747.

[4] 1692–1763; *Poems*, Chalmers, vol. xv.

[5] 1722–70; *A Song to David*, 1763; *Poems*, Chalmers, vol. xvi.

[6] 1748–88; *Poems*, Chalmers, vol. xviii.

[7] See for example the *Ode Written in a Visit to the Country in Autumn*.

These former modes of sensibility are projected by the Present into a vague Past, and associated with all that is distant, different, contrary—with all that classicism was accustomed to despise. The years of romance when the chivalrous spirit of the novels of adventure held sway, the Gothic times when faith built up the great cathedrals, in a word the whole of the Middle Ages, shine with a sovereign attraction. To bring their image back again, is to resuscitate the sentiments which animated them, is to revive them, and with them one's self. Thus the mental rhythm was already inclining hearts towards the Past; it called for a vast recommencement; and the relics of the nation's Past come to have a privileged place among the influences which imagination most willingly obeys.

These relics are in the first place the buildings of antiquated style, anterior to the Renaissance, and to the architectural taste imitated from the Ancients. The subconscious reaction against classicism conceives a love for the Gothic, and this epithet, which only recently was still an opprobrium, now by degrees becomes a term of pious affection. In particular, the ruins of monuments left to themselves and almost forming a part of Nature appeal, not only to the feeling for the Past, but to that of the picturesque as to that of landscape; the success in literature of the old abbeys is plainly seen before the middle of the century; they win first place in the favour of the poets before the strongholds and all the appurtenances of feudalism have their turn.

Not less full of this spirit of the Past are the legends and popular traditions. Their value lies in a naïve simplicity of character which contradicts the artificial refinement of pseudo-classical art; their rhythmic forms, and above all the ballads, will rank among the most forceful of the excitants of Pre-Romanticism. But the prestige of fashionable and polished literature keeps this awakening sympathy in the background; at a slightly later date it will force itself into prominence.

A speedier victory comes to the national writers, from Chaucer to Milton, whose fame from 1660 onwards had suffered a partial eclipse, and who despite the discipline of their form appear to offer, as against the classical models, a lesson in independence. Already before 1750 the tragic appeal of Shakespeare is almost universally admired; Milton benefits by all the revival of respect, if not of zeal, which the middle-class shows to Puritan austerity, and the versification of his great poems is an example that is more and more copied. But it is Spenser's wealth of imagination which perhaps excites the keenest enthusiasm among the innovators.

Finally, in the play of imagery there are stimulating influences which originate from within; such are the notions that correspond to absent objects, removed in space, and which owe it to their intrinsic quality not to be indifferent. Foreign lands and peoples, exotic settings, are not directly seen; but the ideas they stir up, which are added to by the descriptions of travellers, provide a valuable means of finding relief to the need for sensation and emotion. Exoticism, the traces of which in English literature are always and to tell the truth everywhere recognisable, will scarcely flourish on a large scale until towards the last three decades of the century; but already at the time of Gray its attraction is being felt, chiefly in the form of a Northern or Scandinavian ideal, which by opposing the Latin and French poles of classical influences marks with increasing distinctness an artistic and moral conflict in progress. The magnetism of this new force of inspiration is due no doubt to the fact that certain hidden elements of the national originality are gradually becoming alive to their own existence.

These diverse themes call forth and beget one another; they tend to form an organic whole; they constitute, at the very heart of the age of Johnson, the psychological substance of an incipient Romanticism. Incapable as yet of creating for itself an adequate form, this renewed inspiration can only express itself through the channels of a literature of transition. But its inner elements continue to assume more definite shape and acquire a richer quality, while the apparent signs of its progress accumulate as time goes on. Towards 1770, one can speak of Pre-Romanticism. Before this date, it is better to look upon a Collins or a Gray as the most complete representative, at this provisional stage, of the poetry of sentiment.

Their work shows us the fusion of the successive themes which go to make up this poetry. To the love of Nature and melancholy is added that of the Past, the attraction of Ruins, the curious desire for the erudite knowledge of bygone times, the sense of archaism; the exercise of imagination, in a word, is intimately united to that of sensibility; and as images are not sought after for themselves, but for the virtue of their emotional appeal, one can say that a subtle shade of emotion, namely "wonder," comes to add itself to the range of affective states which poetry aims at calling to life. It is by means of this diffuse quality that we can define the new contribution of this last group to a movement which in other respects they only illustrate as a whole.

The illustration, if one may so term it, is as yet imperfect, held in check by the resistance of an accepted literary tradition. The poetical fecundity of wonder accompanied with emotion does not wholly reveal itself, for this sentiment is far from attaining its full intensity. But within the limits of an art which a persisting classicism renders sober, and of which it also in a way paralyses the expression, one can already perceive the mental foundation of the coming literature: it is a group of tendencies organised round a central aspiration which makes for a return to an anti-intellectual and older type of inner life, a type which is felt to be more truly and more spontaneously national.

5. Collins, Gray, etc.—The poetry of Collins[1] is of rare and precious quality. His work is small, being prematurely and tragically interrupted. It is unequal, still encumbered by passive habits, and formal conventions; the effort of a young and fresh inspiration upon a classical language and classical methods gives to his expression, on the other hand, something strained and at times obscure. But he infuses new life into the ode; and without leaving the contemporary plane of poetry, he re-creates it by the fervour of his genius in lyrical moments of perfect sweetness.

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[1] William Collins, born at Chichester in 1721, of a middle-class commercial family, studied at Oxford, and displayed a certain anxiety of character, the sign perhaps already of mental instability; published while yet at the University his *Persian Eclogues* (1744); then came his *Verses to Sir Thomas Hanmer on His Edition of Shakespeare's Works*, 1743. Renouncing a Church career, he decided to be a poet, dreamed of the theatre, of historical works, of a translation of Aristotle's Poetics; in 1747 appeared the *Odes on Several Descriptive and Allegoric Subjects*, and the death of Thomson drew from his pen in 1749 another Ode (1749). Discouraged in public indifference and material worries, he was saved from penury by a legacy in 1749, but fell a victim to nervous depression which, at moments, bordered on insanity. He died in 1759, leaving behind an unfinished ode *On the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland Considered as the Subject of Poetry*, published in 1788. *Poems*, ed. by Stone, 1907; see also *Poetical Works, with Memoir*, ed. by Moy Thomas (Aldine Poets), 1892; *Poetical Works of Gray and Collins*, ed. by A. Lane Poole, 1918.

If his flights are weighted down by a matter that is heavy or dead, the reason is that invention with him has to work in an artificial setting. He does not claim freedom of choice in his subjects, the tradition of the pindaric ode forces itself upon him; and although he retains only the more summary elements, and constructs stanzas that are for the most part regular and simple, yet he does not dare to give himself up to the pure effusion which his temperament would fain desire. And so his lines are laden with allegories, while he personifies abstractions without ceasing. His style is not immune from dross, such as banal epithets, false elegance, traces of a pseudo-philosophical vocabulary intended to heighten the idea by means of a generality and a nobility that are wholly exterior.

But the dominant impression is that of a vital sincerity. The odes of Collins are full of a diffuse feeling for Nature; he looks up to Thomson with affection and respect; his evocations of landscapes are brief, and he does not seek them out for themselves; they only offer a harmonious setting for the idea and the emotion. The atmosphere of melancholy pervades all his work; it springs from a spontaneous sensibility, and Young's influence only came to give definite shape to certain themes. The note of Collins's inspiration is elegiac; tenderness breathes in his lines (*Ode to Pity*), and the uncertainty of what lies beyond, the thrill of death, connect him with the night and graveyard school. Even the national note, the serious pride in English liberty, so characteristic of a poetry that is both middle-class and moralising, can be found in his verse (*Ode to Liberty*).

He has these elements in common with others. His most original characteristic, and one in which he marks a new enriching of sentimental poetry, is the imaginative idealisation of emotion. The taste for ruins, for the Past, the instinctive cult of wonder, are everywhere in evidence. Collins was in contact, in sympathy with Joseph and Thomas Warton; his admiration and homage are for Milton and Spenser (*Ode on the Poetical Character*). The ode on the *Passions* expresses pagan regrets that announce the longing of a Keats; the ode on the *Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland*, and their fecundity for the artist, is a marvellous intuition of the future of poetry. The feeling for exoticism had already revealed itself in his first poems, the *Persian Eclogues*, which he himself judged severely, and which are indeed, despite charming details, very imperfect attempts in verse.

These efforts, these curiosities and these symptoms are still in truth superficial. The deepest of his individual gifts is the faculty of feeling and of transmitting the subtle sensation of mystery; a faculty for suggestion and symbol, the most essentially romantic of all, and the power of which in the case of Collins is intimately bound up with the troubled unrest of his hallucinated, almost morbid mind. It is here that at his epoch he stands without a rival. And this unique quality is not found above all in the *Ode to Fear*—where it is directly expressed—despite the strangeness of certain accents, and the bold impressionism which translates a vague sense of terror by means of happily chosen correspondences of images and sounds; but in the pure masterpieces, and supremely in the *Ode to Evening*, the most delicately exquisite of eighteenth century poems; where a pensive colouring, rich in subdued restrained vibrations, spread out over the landscape as over the meditative mind that contemplates it, fuses in so harmonious a manner the charm of twilight, the paling lights, the oncoming silence and gloom, all that the hour holds of happy and foreboding intent, into one suggestion of a mysterious eloquence.

Here again the language is learned, wholly steeped in literary memories, but of a natural spontaneous grace; and the classical instrument is handled with a subtlety of feeling that is quite modern. It is in this way that Collins has at times rejuvenated the form of poetry; a very fine sense of word values, a musical perception of their expressive force, give them an appropriateness, a freshness, a force of suggestion, that seem to renew them. He has in a pure inspiration the supreme gift of simplicity; it is not yet the simplicity at once moral and verbal of Wordsworth: Collins's vocabulary remains laboured, and the *Ode to Simplicity* does not fulfil all its promise. But where this classicism is perfect, it is sufficiently spiritualised by an inner youthfulness of spirit to rejoin Romanticism in its moments of soberness. The rhythms are adapted to the sentiment with a very sure intuition, which presages the freedom of the future. And even allegory with Collins takes on a new aspect; his personifications do not remain abstract; he enlivens them with an imaginative vitality that is happily and delicately shaded, lends them traits he has borrowed from reality, and shows them in movement and action. Through selection and tact, his descriptive and psychological art succeeds in creating a beauty that is strong, original and fine, although a trifle difficult.

Gray[1] is closely allied to Collins, and yet differs from him. Fate has decreed that he should be seen in the perspective of his rival, whom he overshadowed during his lifetime, but whose lyrical quality he does not quite equal.

Gray is also a transitional poet; but not in the same way. With Collins a new inspiration actually reconciles itself, although not always happily, with modes of thought and expression of former times; these contrary elements are not reduced to unity; there subsists something unsettled, and some want of balance. With Gray the groups of tendencies are not in the same relationship; one of them, incontestably, imposing its law upon the other. Gray's talent is primarily disciplined. A scrupulous artist, conscientious and delicate to the extreme, his desire was to realise, in all he wrote, both the harmony of tone and the perfection of form.

He therefore obeyed the dominant preoccupation of a laboured art; and as such an effort demands the mastery of self, a lucid attention, the care of detail, it would not be averse to the reality of things to see there, in the plenitude and truth of the term, a classical effort. The poetry of Gray abounds in all the seeds of the coming age; it is wholly animated by emotions which around it are preparing the rejuvenation of literature. To this yet obscure work, it has contributed as much as any other. But it is revolutionary with a wise prudence that, far from denying the established order of things, rather keeps it up, and even prolongs it into the innovations of the future.

So remarkable is the stamp of this character upon his verse, that one might recognise in it an intermediary art, a mixed and perhaps a true classicism. The slender inspiration of Gray has produced some exquisite fruits; because, already profiting from the rise of the new sap, it retains the benefit of a learned and refined culture. The reasoning aridness of classical poetry is here, by an inner progress, enriched and made more mellow; the luxuriance and uncertainty of Romanticism are neutralised in advance by the authority of choice and taste, that still remains sovereign. A poetry such as this makes one feel what is lacking in the excessive intellectuality of the age of Pope; by mastering and sublimating emotional impulses in a sober form, it approximates, both in spirit and in letter, to an ideal classicism, one that would represent discipline without impoverishment; it suggests the memory of the masterpieces which have seemed at times to achieve this distinction.

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[1] Thomas Gray, born in London, in 1716, was the son of a broker, studied at Eton, then came to Cambridge where he spent most of his life as a scholar in semi-seclusion, at Peterhouse and Pembroke. In 1739–41 he travelled on the Continent with Horace Walpole, admired the Alps and visited the Grande Chartreuse. His first poem dates from 1742; *An Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard,* begun about 1745, appeared in 1750 and brought him fame. It was again published in the *Six Poems* (1753), followed by the *Odes* of 1757, which include *The Progress of Poësy* and *The Bard.* His historical and scholarly studies are reflected in *The Fatal Sisters* and *The Descent of Odin* (new edn. of *Poems,* 1768). Gray travelled as a tourist, visited notably Scotland and the Lake district, and compiled a diary of his impressions. Appointed to the Professorship of Modern History at Cambridge, he composed a last official ode, and died in 1771. The collection of his *Letters* is extremely interesting. *Works,* ed. by Gosse, 1884; *Selected Poems,* ed. by Gosse, 1895; *English Poems,* ed. by Tovey, 1898; ed. by Charles, 1914; *Poems Published in 1768,* ed. by Bell, 1916; *Poetical Works of Gray and Collins,* ed. by Lane Poole, 1918; *Letters,* ed. by Tovey, 1900–1912; *Correspondence of Gray, Walpole, West, Ashton,* ed. by Toynbee, 1915; *Essays and Criticisms,* ed. by Northup, 1911. See Gosse, *Gray* (English Men of Letters), 1889; Sir L. Stephen, *Gray* (in *Dictionary of National Biography*); Northup, *A Bibliography of Thomas Gray,* 1917.

To Gray belongs the honour of recalling, in certain of his accents, the delicate and fine felicity of a Vergil or a Racine. But the perspective would be false that would place him, as an eclectic and supreme genius, almost at the summit of English poetry. Critics fond above all of measure and balance, like Matthew Arnold, may have crushed him under such an honour. He does not possess the necessary creative force to fuse together the contrary impulses of romantic spontaneity and classical lucidity, without lowering the standard of either, and while sustaining both at their highest possible pitch; the wearing psychological effort of such a synthesis is beyond him. In fact, Gray's art does not dominate the conflict of tendencies; he makes a choice and takes a side; he clearly settles down with the friends of discipline and order. Only at brief intervals is he truly a conciliator; and he purchases this noble ambition, these sparse successes, at the cost of semi-sterility.

His work, however small it be, is divided into two unequal parts. Most of these short poems are circumstantial compositions, in accordance with the type bequeathed to the eighteenth century by the Restoration; they range from light playful verse to the pindaric ode; develop commonplaces, teem with allegories, and personify all the virtues and all the vices. At first sight, therefore, the matter would appear to be little else than artificial and mediocre; and indeed the manner is not without bearing the marks of a thought that is readily general and abstract, and of a search for an elegance towards which too many precursors had opened the way. But Gray's style, in his least personal moments, is never banal; it is always saved from pure passivity by a concern for propriety and accuracy; it has always at least a surface polish. To this negative quality is most often added an inner distinction; and at times, a compactness, a force of energy, which lend an inevitable character to the expression. Gray abounds in striking passages; to more than one idea he has given its definitive perfection. The close attention to the chastened merit of the form is further evidenced in a very careful construction, and in an exquisite sense of proportion and order.

And this extremely attentive art guides a sincere inspiration without stifling it. Whatever the theme, Gray knows how to vest it with the grace of true sensibility. His visions of Nature are discreet, pretty rather than fresh and new; but if in his poetry he is hardly the disciple of Thomson, he is in immediate harmony with the school of Young. Melancholy with him is something constitutional; his note of tenderness has a winning sweetness. And his imagination is active; it delights in adumbrating symbols; it perceives the hidden relations in things. Thus it is that Gray's classical poetry contains within itself effects of subtle fitness and suggestion which announce Romanticism; he has discovered rhythms, utilised the power of sounds, and even created evocations. The triumph of this sensibility allied to so much art is to be seen in the famous *Elegy,* which from a somewhat reasoning and moralising emotion has educed a grave, full, melodiously monotonous song, in which a century weaned from the music of the soul tasted all the sadness of eventide, of death, and of the tender musing upon self.

The other group is connected with a research and disquietude that are more consciously innovating. There is in Gray a vein of erudition and archæology; he was one of the first to feel the attraction of the Middle Ages and of Scandinavian antiquity. At the British Museum, which was then just opening, he read old texts; he dreamed of a history of English poetry, which Thomas Warton was destined to write. *The Bard,* and especially *The Fatal Sisters* and *The Descent of Odin,* composed before the publication of Percy's collection, are, as it were, soundings taken in the ocean of mediæval superstition, of primitive legends and beliefs, of simple and popular wonders, the depth and fecundity of which were about to be gradually revealed. The part played by the refrain in the first two pieces, the rough conciseness of the last, are artistic intuitions remarkable at this date.

All this is of rather slender bulk. But there is, in addition, a man in Gray, whom only his letters disclose in his entirety. Here one enjoys the charm of a real spontaneousness, that is witty without effort; of an affectionate nature, made for friendship; susceptible, as well, to the comic side of things; free from any Puritan narrowness, and on the lookout for the picturesque trait; nervous and feminine, one would like to say, endowed with a lovable and simple grace; in no wise insular, but fashioned by travel and study, open to the appreciation of French classics as well as to an inquisitive taste for the archaic and the "Gothic." The literary opinions of which these letters are full form one of their principal attractions. Above all, they give to the feeling for landscape a franker and more complete expression than that which is found in the poems; and one is astonished to read, at a date so early as 1739, about the sublimity of the Alps, and the religious horror of high mountains, effusions which outdistance the stage marked by Thomson in the progress towards the love of wild Nature. The diary of the journey to the English Lake district of thirty years later, is full of an intelligent and precise passion for the nobility and austerity of the horizons that Wordsworth was later to love. The modernity of these impressions is surprising; but they retain a soberness of line, even in the noting of the most indeterminate flights of the soul, which is the especial mark of Gray.

After Collins and Gray must be mentioned poets of less talent, in whom there dominates such or such an element of their complex inspiration. A first group would be formed with Shenstone and Jago,[1] whose most characteristic trait is a cult of Nature, that is realistic and at the same time tender.

Not that Shenstone is the man of one theme only; he tried his hand at many, without ever finding himself decisively. None of his contemporaries better shows us the absolute inability of feeling at this date to renew the means of expression. *The Schoolmistress* is a piece of playfulness, begun with an intention of irony, and of which the subject has by degrees won over the poet's sympathy; for if there is humour in Shenstone, and a verve that is at times broad, there is a still greater fund of sentimentalism. But his imitation of Spenser, suggested by a sincere admiration, ends in a rather awkward pastiche. His taste for rusticity announces Cowper and Wordsworth through some of its intuitive aspects; he beautifies his country retreat of the Leasowes with innumerable artificial ornaments, without losing his susceptibility to the power of free Nature; nor is his *Pastoral Ballad* devoid of descriptive grace. But it is in vain that he praises simplicity, and desires it: this quality is most obviously lacking in his diction and his style; his short poems are encumbered with the trash of a degenerate classicism. . . .

There is still much convention, but at the same time more true spontaneity in his friend and correspondent, Jago, a country pastor, who describes to us in four books the landscape as it appears at four successive periods of the day from the top of *Edge-Hill*. This poem of a moralising character, written in a nerveless blank verse, is bathed by a fresh welling inspiration, the love of the soil, of familiar horizons; and despite the rebellious aridness of the form, it owes some alluring sweetness to this running stream.

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[1] William Shenstone, 1714–63; *The Schoolmistress,* 1742; *Poetical Works,* ed. by Gilfillan, 1854. Richard Jago, 1715–81; *Edge-Hill, or the Rural Prospect Delineated and Moralised,* 1767; *Poems,* Chalmers, vol. xiii.

In the work of two Scots writers, Mickle and Home,[1] the revived feeling for Nature can be seen, commingling with the zeal for the archaic, the mediæval imagination. The first is frankly an imitator, who, when he follows Gray, is only mediocre; but when it is Spenser whom he takes as his model, he touches chords of a rather happy although frankly modern note. The second, to-day forgotten, owes to the national subject which he treated in his *Douglas* one of the greatest successes in drama of the century; his declamatory dialogues leave his play the merit of action, and above all that of poetry.

Finally, the poems of Goldsmith,[2] which won the praise of Gray, have remained popular, for their inspiration, which fuses sentimentality, melancholy, the love for Nature and a simple life, the taste for exoticism, and the evocations of countries and peoples, with moral and political themes after the style of Johnson, had a deep appeal for a nation that was formerly agricultural, but that was already feeling the strain of a swift and unforeseen industrial change. Here again the newly acquired tenderness of the poetry does not break the paralysing spell that holds the language fast. But Goldsmith had in him the natural instinct of an elegiac rhythm, and he knew how to harmonise the cadence of his verse with the emotion which he proposed to call forth.

To be consulted: Beers, *History of English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century*, 1899; *Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. x. chaps. v. vi. vii. x.; Courthope, *History of English Poetry*, vol. v., 1905; Farley, *Scandinavian Influences on the English Romantic Movement*, 1903; Gosse, *History of Eighteenth Century Literature*, 1889; Idem, *Gray* (English Men of Letters), 1887; Millar, *The Mid-Eighteenth Century*, 1902; Morel, *James Thomson*, 1895; Mornet, *Le Sentiment de la Nature en France de Rousseau à Bernardin de Saint-Pierre*, 1907; Morton, *The Spenserian Stanza in the 18th Century* (*Modern Philology*), Jan., 1913; Phelps, *The Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement*, 1893; Myra Reynolds, *The Treatment of Nature in English Poetry between Pope and Wordsworth*, 1912; Seccombe, *The Age of Johnson*, 1900; Thomas, *Le Poète Edward Young*, 1901; Van Tieghem, *La Poésie de la Nuit et des Tombeaux en Europe au XVIII^e Siècle*, 1921.

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[1] W. J. Mickle, 1735–88; *Sir Martyn, A Poem in the Manner of Spenser*, 1767; *Poems*, Chalmers, vol. xvii. John Home, 1722–1808; *Douglas*, 1756.

[2] See below, chap. iii. sect. 3. *The Traveller*, 1764; *The Deserted Village*, 1770.

CHAPTER III

THE NOVEL OF SENTIMENT

1. The Middle-Class Spirit and the Novel.—The novel of the time of Johnson is renewed in a more efficient and more complete manner than the poetry by the spirit of the middle class, that instrument of the inevitable moral transformation. The poetry is the slave of an ancient form, which classicism has carried to a high degree of perfection; it puts up a very strong resistance to the desire for innovation, and only accepts the change in inspiration by veiling it in a customary and persistent style of writing. On the contrary, the novel is a still amorphous kind; if its first sources lie in the distant past, it only now reaches its full growth; even with De Foe it has not completed its development. New matter can all the better accommodate itself to this elastic framework, as prose is a mode of expression of unlimited suppleness.

Above all, there is a deep affinity between the dominant instincts of the middle classes, and this branch of literature, the possibilities of which have remained intact. It lends itself better than any other to ethics and sentiment. After having formerly represented allegorical or ideal visions, it tends more and more to become a picture of life. The middle-class mind would have this picture real, because it has a firm hold upon reality, and cannot break itself away from it. Thus realism will come to find its most favourable field in the novel. But a real picture will arouse the same vital reactions as life itself; it will beget a mood of reflectiveness applied to conduct, and will tell upon the resolution to behave well; it will be animated by moralising intentions; and in order to set these working, it will have recourse to feelings.

Nothing is therefore more natural than to see one of the creators of the modern English novel, Richardson, seeking his inspiration in Puritan sentimentalism. He has hardly written, ere realism, treating itself in its turn as an end, sets up against his example an example that is openly contradictory; from this reaction there issues a movement, and Fielding also has a following. But the sentimental novel continues to develop; and after having furnished a convenient expression for the desire to soften hearts with a view to edifying, it will come, in the work of a Sterne, to satisfy the quest of a voluptuous gratification in the seeking after emotion for its own sake.

2. Richardson.—Richardson[1] is not less than De Foe a representative of the average middle class. It is not only the semi-aristocratic class of rich merchants, but that of the traders and artisans, who find in him their spokesman. Thus another and a decisive step is taken towards the conquest of literature by the original instincts of the British nation; if the mass by far the most numerous, the common people, is still excluded from exercising any influence in the domain of letters, the social groups whose thought from now onwards makes itself felt are in immediate contact with this mass, and share its main inspirations. The surroundings from which Richardson comes are already very similar to those from which Dickens will come.

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[1] Samuel Richardson, born in Devon in 1689, was the son of a joiner, followed his family to London, received a simple education and was apprenticed to a printer, whose daughter he married, set up in business for himself and was successful. The compiling of a collection of model letters for the various circumstantial happenings in life led him to write his first novel, *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740), the success of which was immediate. Then appeared *Clarissa, or The History of a Young Lady* (1747–8); and *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* (1753–4). His reputation brought him into contact with social and literary circles, and he made many feminine friendships. He published two collections of *Maxims or Meditations* taken from his novels, and died in 1761, leaving a voluminous correspondence (ed. by Mrs. Barbauld, 1804). *Novels*, ed. by L. Stephen, 1883; with *Life* by Phelps, 1901–3. See Diderot, *Eloge de Richardson*, 1761; J. Texte, *Rousseau et les origines du cosmopolitisme littéraire*, 1895; Schmidt, *Richardson, Rousseau und Goethe*, 1875; biographies and studies by C. Thomson, 1900; A. Dobson (English Men of Letters), 1902; Canby, *Pamela Abroad* (*Modern Language Notes*), 1903, vol. xviii.

It is from this national and almost plebeian sap that he draws all his strength. This innovator did not deliberately wish to be an artist. No one has ever created a new form, or placed upon a form in course of development a stamp of finished realisation, with surer intuition and less lucidity. The subject matter of Richardson's novels is impersonal; it is the permanent fund of Puritan tradition, brought again to light by the combined action of the moral rhythm and social causes. The impulse to write in this case is nothing else than the need of explaining an edifying theme; without going further back than the modern age inaugurated by the reign of Charles II., the allegory of Bunyan, the essay of Steele, and the novel of De Foe had all represented, in various ways, the successive efforts of this pent-up fund of inspiration to break out through the rational plane of the literature in vogue. Richardson only adds to this tradition the all-powerfulness of a triumphant sentimentalism, allied to the utilitarian concern in matters of conduct, and in close accord with it.

The form is newer; but it is the luck of a genius who is led by the instinct of his creative forces. The problem as to what models Richardson could have followed remains obscure; despite striking analogies in the subject matter and even some resemblance in tone, he does not appear to have been inspired by the *Marianne* of Marivaux;[1] and the picaresque novel of Le Sage was of too free a cynicism not to wound him. As for the choice of an exposition by way of letters, it was not absolutely original, nor was it intentional; *Pamela* grew from a collection of epistolary patterns meant for humble folks; and Richardson himself had been too early practised in the style not to be drawn to it by a natural bent.

The most likely conjecture, therefore, is that of a dramatic action which springs from an edifying theme, and develops through a series of successive epistles, under the guiding idea of an allegory in the manner of Bunyan. Such a view, which reduces to a minimum the part of any literary intention in the genesis of *Pamela*, is confirmed by the hesitant art of this first novel, in which one feels that the author is only finding his way as he writes. Lastly, his realism does not require explanation; the example of *Gil Blas* or of *Marianne* was not necessary in order to incite Richardson to adhere closely to a detailed view of things, or to situate the greater part of his plot among the lower classes of society. Realism can have the most diverse of origins; here it owes nothing to the classical spirit, to the desire for truth in itself, a desire actuated either by an intellectual taste or by a scientific scruple of the writer. As with De Foe, it issues from the concrete tendencies of middle-class thought, from an attention directed towards facts by a strong utilitarianism, that is further strengthened by moral and religious sentiment. In describing with passionate minuteness certain aspects of the humble world in which a maidservant moves, Richardson reviews an aspect of reality that he knows, and that his presumed readers will themselves know; above all, he obeys the inevitable discipline of a Puritan imagination, for which the least important details of the setting wherein is enacted the destiny of a soul owe an infinite value to such a stake, and to the influence that they are able to exert upon the event.

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[1] For the affirmative thesis see G. C. Macaulay, *Modern Language Review*, viii (Oct. 4, 1913), and for the negative, R. Crane, *Modern Philology*, vol. xvi., Jan., 1919; *Modern Language Review*, Jan., 1922.

This art of description, therefore, only converges in appearance with one of the directions which the principle of classicism could urge it to follow. As a matter of fact, the realism of Richardson is not animated by the classical spirit, and moves away from it. Besides it is very limited; in its sentimentalism, it emphasizes certain elements of reality, and neglects others, while in several essential respects it tends towards idealism. As the material world interests it much less than souls, and only in the measure in which it inclines them to good or to evil, the psychological analysis alone develops quite freely; each cranny of the heart is sounded with the clear-sightedness of the moralist; and this would not in itself be contrary to the main preoccupation of classical writers, if a set preference of and search for the emotional feelings did not incline the analysis towards tenderness in pathos and edification, instead of towards clear understanding and knowledge. Similarly, in place of the cynical crudeness towards which the courage of the intellectual searcher after truth was readily attracted, we have here a taste that is severely docile—or that wants to be so—to the rules of delicacy.

At bottom, these rules are not fully respected; and this is the effect of a creation that has been stimulated by a vigorous instinct, and in which the element of the subconscious acts and reveals itself with relative independence. The account of Pamela's long struggle against a violence which at times becomes singularly precise is not of an irreproachable moral quality. And the lesson itself of the book is ambiguous, as soon as one leaves the extremely simple conventions of a sermonising psychology. The virtue of the heroine resembles too closely a calculated skilfulness for the reader not to perceive the secret which she hides from herself. In constructing this personage, Richardson was guided by the irresistible intuition of the organic whole which constitutes character; unknowingly, he has given her the implicit utilitarian qualities of a Puritan temperament devoid of nobleness. The clear thinking, the cleverness, the trickery even which Pamela displays everywhere else, exclude the possibility of an innocence either complete, or fully disinterested. Another excess, where is revealed an artificial morality, imposed upon human nature like some rigid constraint, and claiming to reduce it all to a simple infallible effort, is that of *Sir Charles Grandison,* who has become the symbol of the pedantry of perfection.

The ethics of *Clarissa Harlowe* are on a higher plane; and a purified inspiration animates the masterpiece of Richardson. The Christian renunciation of life and happiness, the acceptance of sacrifice, are here displayed with an ardour that is sincere enough to veil the cherished hope of supernatural rewards. The idealism of sorrow attains an almost serene quality; and the emotion that radiates from this painstakingly cruel drama is infectious, until the moment when the death of the heroine is too lengthily and complacently exploited. On the whole, pathos is the central characteristic, the eminent merit of the book. The action is wholly absorbed by it; just as in *Pamela* it is concentrated in the duel between two rival wills—if one passes over the additional and rather thankless story of Pamela's married bliss.

Richardson's talent is made for this austere concentration of interest, which recalls the sermon and the religious allegory; the more complicated plot of *Sir Charles Grandison* seems in comparison to be loose and less strong. It is through the unity of the emotion that *Clarissa Harlowe* preserves a superior artistic value; it is also through its pathos that the work had an irresistible hold over the English and European public. Born of the resolution of a conscience that applies all its effort to the supreme task of salvation, this power of crushing to the utmost limit the sympathetic fibres of the heart is Richardson's triumph in literature.

Along with the sombre dramatic force of Puritanism, this art has also its very keen desire for spiritual clear-sightedness, within the bounds of a purely moral analysis, that is directed by the need for safety and health, rather than by that for truth. The psychological realism is therefore here of a particular nature; but inside its limits it is sincere and effective. The light which Richardson throws upon the deep secrets of consciousness, the working of passions, the struggle of instincts, which his settled belief classes unhesitatingly into the categories of good and evil, has its value for our knowledge of the human heart, in that it reaches the obscure regions, and lends a singular relief to the slightest detail. And it happens that this light becomes more audacious, more revealing, than Richardson himself, according to all appearance, would have desired.

Among the most interesting moments in his work are those in which the artist and the psychologist, escaping from the tutelage of the moralist, actually come to recover their independence, if they do not claim it. The characters in these novels are conceived with the object of serving an action; any importance, any individual life they may receive outside of this rigorous end in view constitute a breach of the law of their existence. Now Richardson has in him a pure faculty of artistic creation, by which at times he has allowed himself to be carried away. Through the effect of a logic that has then been freed from all constraint, his personages acquire the fullness, the consistency, the picturesque particularity, of a realism which is no longer that of moral intention, but of concrete truth or æsthetic intensity.

That Lovelace, whose figure of a seducer is exaggerated by a kind of Satanic perversity, should develop into a superhuman creature, and the symbol of a divided soul in which evil triumphs, has in itself nothing which can yet wound the Puritan principles of the author; and it is the religious imagination which here destroys the sense of the real. But elsewhere, reality itself is enforced at the expense of the simplicity demanded by an edifying art. Pamela is very much alive; she has some roguishness and coquetry; so that the naïveness of her innocence loses not a little thereby. A finer and more supple notion of feminine purity, on the contrary, permits Clarissa and her friend to show a piquant naturalness, without losing anything either in dignity or in likelihood. The vigour of touch with which are drawn some of the secondary figures, such as Mrs. Jewkes or the parents of Clarissa, is derived from a searching after effects of a distinctly literary order—a happy aim indeed. But the character of Charlotte Grandison is of too pleasing a spontaneity, too free and too irreverent, not to destroy the general tonality indispensable to the prestige of the hero. One might say that Richardson, obsessed by Fielding's success, has here wanted to rival the latter's verve, just as Fielding in his turn allowed himself to imitate the other's pathos. The artist has been successful, but not without compromising the unity of emotion and doctrine in which the moralist and the novelist have each wanted to put the best of themselves.

The epistolary form, at first adopted without any deliberate choice, then retained by preference, has its drawbacks; it inclines to prolixity and repetition—the novels of Richardson are interminable; it does not allow of the simplicity of one unique outlook, entails the elimination of certain aspects of things, and almost of necessity gives much too great prominence to others. Of an artificial nature, it reconciles itself with a lively and dramatic action only at the cost of much improbability; and on several occasions Richardson has to replace the exchange of letters between his heroes by a "journal." But it is a form of writing that favours a concrete exposition, it can easily be allied with the minuteness of inner analysis, and by always allowing the account of the facts to be seen through a sensibility, it lends itself wonderfully to a plot that is coloured by emotion. On the other hand, by distributing the vision of things among several distinct points of view, it tends to a relativist philosophy that confronts and reconciles the diverse personal equations of parallel experiences. This tendency will develop in the *Humphrey Clinker* of Smollett; it is already in evidence in Richardson, and limits the subjectivism of his sentimental method of expression.

The artist in him thus has his own power, and his own merits. The style, conscientious and slightly self-conscious, suggests that the writer is persevering rather than gifted; but the language has precision, energy, and at times a certain raciness.

The moral and literary figure of Richardson would not be complete, if one did not look for it all in the story of his life; and his correspondence, a trifle sermonising but full of interest, remains the best image of this. He should be pictured up as filling soberly, or with a serious playfulness, his part of adviser, of confessor almost, with his friends of both sexes; finding delight in the society of his lady admirers, reading out his works to them, giving them his opinion on all the detail of their existence; candidly practising his ethics and his sentimentalism; and on the whole, despite rather frequent traces of narrowness or morbidity, maintaining without too much artifice, throughout the episodes of a successful writer's life who can also be a trifle jealous and irritable, an attitude which probably to him did not any longer differ from perfect sincerity.

The influence of Richardson in Europe is an important chapter of comparative literature. In France, in Germany, and in all the countries in which the contagion of sentimentalism is awakening, he has favoured it with all the force of his pathos. Diderot was enthusiastic in his praise of the author of *Clarissa Harlowe;* Rousseau was indebted to him for the general inspiration of the *Nouvelle Héloïse;* and the *Werther* of Goethe in certain respects is part of his spiritual posterity.

3. Goldsmith: "The Vicar of Wakefield."—The success of the sentimental novel is deep and lasting; but Richardson does not immediately find a continuator worthy to succeed him. His influence is mixed with a spirit rather different from his in the work of the sister of his great rival, Sarah Fielding,[1] whose *David Simple* is the naïve and moralizing account, at once realistic and emotional, of the journey of an upright soul through life. The *Peter Wilkins* of Robert Paltock[2] inclines sentimentalism strangely in the direction of a fanciful liberty of imagination.

With brilliant success the novel of Goldsmith,[3] *The Vicar of Wakefield,* renews the inspiration of sentiment, by bringing it nearer to the average human being, and by delivering it from a Puritan tension against which many temperaments will remain rebellious.

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[1] 1710–68; *David Simple,* 1744.

[2] 1697–1767; *Peter Wilkins,* 1750.

[3] Oliver Goldsmith, born in Ireland (1728), the son of a vicar, spent his youth in poverty and difficulties; was destined for the church; then adopted medicine; travelled on the Continent, and after a few years of wandering life he eked out a living still somewhat precarious, but full of hard work, as a writer in straitened circumstances and undertaking all sorts of tasks. While engaged in translations, critical articles, historical compilations, essays, etc., he published *An Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe,* 1759; edited a periodical, *The Bee,* 1759; collected Chinese Letters under the title of *The Citizen of the World,* 1762. A poem, *The Traveller,* 1764, attracted sufficient notice to enable him to publish in 1766 a novel, completed some four years earlier, *The Vicar of Wakefield,* which was poorly appreciated at first, but destined to universal fame. For the stage he wrote a comedy, *The Good-Natured Man,* 1768, and this was received with a certain deference; then he published a new poem, *The Deserted Village,* 1770; produced another comedy, *She Stoops to Conquer,* 1773, which was a great success. He died in 1774, a victim of overwork and financial worry. *Works,* ed. by Gibbs, 1885–6; *The Bee,* ed. by Dobson, 1903; *The Citizen of the World,* ed. by Dobson, 1891; *The Vicar of Wakefield,* ed. by Doble, 1909. See the biographies and studies by Dobson (Great Writers), 1888; R. A. King, 1910; F. F. Moore, 1910; the article of R. S. Crane (*G. and the Marquis of Argens*), *Modern Philology,* August, 1921.

The pathos of Richardson really gave expression to the deepest needs of his own nature; but this expression remained indirect and veiled. With Goldsmith, the particular quality of a soul is more directly revealed; sentimentalism more clearly brings out the inner relation which makes it tend to the entire confession of the self. And it is first in this way that it becomes more human. But, again, the personality which pours itself forth is much more normal; it has greater variety, and better represents the diverse traits which commingle in the physiognomy of the British middle classes. It tempers morality with playfulness, emotion with humour. By virtue of his Irish adaptability, Goldsmith, after Steele, develops and fixes the type of a genial cordiality, in the consciousness and search of which the best instincts of a composite people converge.

The link between the man and the work is straightway recognisable. The writer's whole life is full of a carelessness which exposes itself too much to the rigours of chance not to feel them, and which arms itself with resignation and humour against a contrary fate. Such indeed is the philosophy of the destiny which is here depicted to us. The incidents that cross it are borrowed more than once from the biography of Goldsmith; the peregrinations of his youth furnish a long episode. Through certain of its elements, the *Vicar of Wakefield* is still related to the picaresque type; but the plot, though loose at some moments, concentrates and unifies itself in a true action. It is handled by one who has a keen sense of situations, and here the playwright is recognisable; the first part abounds in pretty comedy scenes, while the second is more dramatic in colouring. The surroundings described are those with which the childhood of Goldsmith had made him familiar. He has put into his book his individual tastes, his political and social ideas. The tone of a charitable simplicity, attentive to the claims of the humble, which is also that of his own sensibility, is breathed from these pages in a manifold suggestion. This humanitarian note becomes even more precise in philanthropic theses against duelling, against the severity of the penal code, on behalf of the reform of prison life. There is already, potentially, the declared preference of a Dickens for the lower ranks, and the satire which Thackeray will level at the snob.

The ethics preached are not the austere Puritanism of Richardson. Goldsmith addresses his lessons just as much to the heart as to the will power of the mind. As with Dickens at a later date, everything resolves itself into the teaching of goodness. Sentiment raised to the status of a doctrine and a rule finds the centre from which it will henceforth radiate over English life: *The Vicar of Wakefield* is the novel of the family and of the home.

So wide, so constant, so universal is the hold of these themes over the emotions, that the book owes to them an unequalled popularity. It is the first masterpiece of domestic literature, which Steele had but hardly sketched. The reaction of simplicity against the artificial life and empty refinement of a frivolous or corrupt society here assumes its full character; without going as far in the field of doctrine as did Rousseau—whose ideas he recalls, and whose influence he slightly felt—Goldsmith teaches us, in fact, a kind of philosophy of Nature. If he has no impassioned descriptions of landscape, he situates his novel in a setting of rustic freshness, and delights in calling forth the sweet pictures of country peace.

Thus one can perceive in Goldsmith the broad deep current that is leading to Romanticism. He has many of the inner feelings of which the new literature will be made up; he has even the retrospective trend of sensibility and imagination. Not only does he extol the moral purity of simple folks, but he finds pleasure in describing the archaic traits of peasant customs, exalts the touching beauty of the old popular ballads, which Percy had just brought back into vogue. He can intuitively discern what is dying and withering in the poetry of his time, and calls for a rejuvenation of form through the suppression of the well-worn epithet. His inspiration remains classical in its sly finesse, its sense of measure, its self-possession, its balance and its humour; his language, of a true and charming spontaneousness, is however in the bondage of the verbal habits of the century; it tends to the generality of expression, and is not devoid of a certain solemnity, redeemed for the pleasure of the reader by its artistic harmony with the professional seriousness of the hero.

Thus the book is connected in rather a complicated way with the realism that permeates the surrounding atmosphere. The working out of the materials borrowed from reality shows skill; the observation is sharp, and the satire often bold; the characters are painted with an exquisitely shaded, but at times cruel sense of truth, beneath the indulgence which envelops them; the vicar's wife is a personage of caustic comedy; a figure such as that of Thornhill, the seducer, is much closer to nature and life than that of Mr. B. of *Pamela*, and the sinner, in Goldsmith, shows himself to be more hardened. . . . But this clear-sightedness, devoid of illusion, is attenuated by the pleasing grace of an idyll; fanciful preconceptions, intentional improbabilities, a tender serenity, bathe us in an atmosphere that is far removed from that in which critical realism usually has its being.

The Vicar of Wakefield opens up a fecund vein, and one which many future novelists will exploit: the middle-class dramas of poverty and pride, the conflict of pure values and of social materialism. From this point of view, its lineage will be very numerous. It is for other reasons, however, that it has remained at the heart itself of English literature. It creates, not for the first time, but in its most average and representative form, a type in which certain of the deepest preferences of the British people will henceforth recognise themselves. The series of psychological traits, forming an organic whole, to the description of which tend not only the portrait of the vicar, but those of his circle, and the general teaching of the story, make up an attitude which one might define as a feeble utilitarian attention, an incomplete critical intelligence, a sincere moral scruple, a generous cordiality; and also innocent faults, some vanity, whims which give a particular bent to the soul, without absorbing it in an egoistical preoccupation of self. In this type, national sentiment likes the normal, real traits—the absence of intellectuality, the concern for behaviour; it does not less approve of the elements which reality has not always to offer, and which answer to its own keen desire for idealisation and optimism, namely, goodness and disinterestedness. Perhaps, also, this last inclination, contradicted as it is by the strong practical instinct of the race, is appreciated because the average individual likes to find it in others. . . .

However it may be, the vicar of Goldsmith is a moral figure of which English literature offers us many close or distant replicas. Before this date, his first lineaments appear in the work of the humorists of the Renaissance and of the seventeenth century; Steele and Addison sketch his picture in Sir Roger de Coverley; Fielding develops it in Parson Adams; Sterne fills it out, in his "Uncle Toby," with incomparable precision of characteristics, but deflects it in a rather special direction. After Goldsmith, it reappears in the pages of Jane Austen, Walter Scott, Dickens, Thackeray. . . . In the fusing of naïve simplicity with natural goodness, the English instinct feels an invincible idealism of temperament, which excludes the highest aims of the mind, but also all the meanness and dryness of the heart. By its tenacious resistance to the irony and blows of Fate, by its power of resilience, wholesome illusion and self-forgetfulness, as by its faculty of moral originality and oddness, by its outlook curiously warped in some directions, by all that an obstinate whim can imply of heroism, this type represents a kind of obscure chivalric generosity, and one has been able to see in it the English and popular counterpart of Don Quixote.

4. **Sterne.**—The work of Sterne[1] is all made up of his personality. With him, the sentimental novel reaches the extreme limit of its principle. The barriers which with Richardson had opposed the display of self—Puritan repression, the desire to instruct, the craving for dramatic effects—here collapse of themselves; leaving only the unlimited exercise of a sensibility which expresses itself, and which carries along with it all the most individual elements of the inner being.

This absolute victory of sentiment is not without an influence upon its intimate quality. In becoming the guiding principle of inspiration, it enters into a full consciousness of its liberty and force; its close association with art must needs introduce into it some artifice. The sentimentalism of Sterne handles the means at its command with a virtuosity that supposes an inner division of the self, a complete mastery of the emotion by the devices employed. His humour, enriched by the supple play of a delectable and lucid originality, implies a detachment, a self-possession in both cases unlimited. Thus an intellectuality, and with it a coldness, creep into the very heart of a literature which represents itself as animated by a communicative ardour. The inability to move feeling, just as to feel, will therefore be the danger that menaces this literature; and long before the advent of Romanticism, indeed as early as the next generation, it will reveal itself as undermined by the special rhetoric and morbid refinement of emotion.

With Sterne himself, this decay is not without making itself already visible. The perfect detachment of the artist, at least, assures him a sovereign ease of manner; and the novel thus becomes, at a very early stage, a form of art that is completely autonomous, capable of receiving all the thought, all the fancy—all the person of a writer, and in a word all the intellectual life of an epoch. Such an elasticity singles it out from now onwards to be what it will become very soon: the best instrument of expression among all others, and the dominant branch of literature in the modern age.

Psychological duality is the characteristic feature of an attitude, such as that of Sterne; and consciousness or artifice does not exclude with him the sincerity of emotion. His sentiment was really part of his life; and a sufficient part, indeed, for him to know by experience its weakness and instability. His moral figure, one of the most curious in the century, is explained as much by his correspondence as by his work. Here one sees him in his youth sending to his fiancée letters that overflow with an exalted, frenzied sensibility, with which the dry indifference of the conjugal epistles of some years later stands out in the most striking contrast. It seems that *Tristram Shandy*, by the singular mixture of its pathos and irony, expresses at once the lesson of this experience, and the obstinacy of a temperament for which the pleasure of sentimentalising was a vital need. In fact, the mature years of Sterne were still to have their passionate moments, and the *Letters to Eliza* are full of the most romantic fire. The *Sentimental Journey* refines the cult of emotion, and puts the finishing touch on its highly elaborate, artificial character, but in no way does it abjure this cult.

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[1] Laurence Sterne, born in 1713, great-grandson of an Anglican bishop, studied at Cambridge, took orders, and after having filled several posts, received an ecclesiastical living at York. He had only written some trifles when there appeared his first volumes of a novel, *Tristram Shandy* (1760, etc.; completed in 1767), which had an immediate success. Delicate in health, he made long stays in France and Italy (1762–4), published a second novel, *A Sentimental Journey*, and died the same year (1768). His *Letters* and *Sermons* form a considerable part of his work. *Works*, ed. by Saintsbury, 1894; ed. by Cross, 1904. *Tristram Shandy* and *A Sentimental Journey*, edn. Temple Classics. See Traill, *Sterne* (English Men of Letters), 1882; P. Stapfer, *Laurence Sterne*, 1870; Cross, *Life and Times of Sterne*, 1909; Sichel, *Sterne*, 1910; Melville, *Life and Letters of Sterne*, 1911.

However strange his vocation may appear, when one thinks of the freedom of his writings, Sterne was a member of the clergy. The many sermons he has left behind still deserve to be read, for the additional help they give us if only to understand his mind. A similar depth of inward reflection is here revealed, by simpler and more direct means than in the novels. Strictly speaking, there is little morality to be found in them; the radiance of an idealistic conviction is absent. But the intuitive and concrete knowledge of the laws of human nature, the basing of the rules of conduct upon the deep reality of instincts, serve as a support to a practical wisdom, with which the lessons of the Gospel are reconciled without too great difficulty. The analysis of the secret movements of the heart shows a remarkable finesse; and the clear-sightedness of the moralist is without illusion. An expert writer here exercises himself in the handling of rhetoric; the effects of emotion are prepared and developed with self-complacent skill; the style already has often the ample resources which it owes to a personal syntax; while the precision, the sureness of the general arrangement, confirm all that one feels of the spirit of conscious determination behind the absolute disorder of *Tristram Shandy.*

A constant, exacting and ingenious pursuit of originality, such is the effort which sums up the intention of Sterne; the other ends he seeks—to amuse, to move the feelings, to instruct—are subordinated to this essential freak which he raises to the dignity of a principle. To extract everything from one's own substance; to stimulate and unceasingly refresh the attention of the reader; to cast nothing in the ready-made moulds of thought or of expression—this is what he wants and what he claims to do. What is, no doubt, the capital scruple of a conscientious art—the fear of the mental automatisms to which laziness or fatigue will succumb—here becomes an exasperated and diseased worry; and this very exasperation gives rise to an unexpected mechanism. The literary figure of Sterne is that of a central inspiration marvellously supple and free, irradiating into diverse but connected forms, in which habit, devices, and almost mania everywhere manifest themselves.

Thus the variety of effects is very far from being infinite, and Sterne is constantly imitating himself. At least he never imitates anybody else, if one examines the substance of his work. No writer ever was more original, by the inner quality of his personality. Yet nothing is easier than to recognise in Sterne the traces of innumerable active suggestions. His genius is assimilative. With a sure divination, he has gone to the sources whence he could draw his inspiration without fear, because it was his own nature that he found there. *Don Quixote* is a pleasant and symbolic tale in which we have an illustration of the contrasting glory and misery of mankind; now it is from the sharp perception, the ironical teaching of this contrast that the philosophy of Sterne is at bottom made up; and so his main novel is full of Cervantes. The half-conscious strangeness, the "quaintness" of Burton, now become more lucidly conscious, permeates every page of his work. His moments of good-nature recall Montaigne. He has succeeded in incorporating all the exaggeration, the jocularity of Rabelais into his more extensive range of effects. He borrows on every side, pillaging his predecessors, for the most part without quoting their names. But what he owes them, he has compounded with what he owes to no one, and this is all that matters.

Tristram Shandy recounts the "life and opinions" of the hero—an indefinite theme, worked out by a verve that has not the slightest concern for order, unity or logic. The story is spun out of a long digression in which a hundred topics are all mixed and interwoven together. It is only in the third book that Tristram is born; his life remains obscure; begun late, it does not finish, and to tell the truth is only a pretext; round it are grouped figures of more prominent relief, and the drollest of inventions, impertinent, paradoxical, and mystifying, pours itself out unceasingly into narrations, sallies, endless conversations and reflections. The most material means add to this bewildering confusion: glancings off of the style, marked by the constant use of the introductory hyphen, incomplete sentences, enigmatical paragraphs, diagrams, white or black pages, etc. The work is a series of mental and verbal pirouettings.

This fancifulness is the humorous vestment—the most variegated imaginable—of a mind which finds a supreme satisfaction, and the full display of its essentially ironic power, in never expressing itself simply. Through the network of these manifold transpositions, from the release of which the comic element springs, is visible the play of the indirect suggestions which give the humour its serious taste and deep value. There is nothing new in the elements of Sterne's philosophy; but it associates in a novel way the subtle cruel analysis of all the mediocre, ugly background covered up by the conventional dignity of social life, with the effusion of an indulgent humanity that accepts, excuses or loves. The feeling of relativity is the very soul of humour; it here develops the whole series of its ironic and sceptical consequences; it is accompanied, on the other hand, by a mixed emotion in which the note of bitter pessimism can be perceived, but where the dominant tone is that of compassionate tolerance.

The ring of this humour is the very resonance of the personality of Sterne; and it is no wonder that the characters he has managed to draw should all suggest the same note with varying shades of difference; for he does not possess the art of creation in the highest degree; the figures of his book are visibly connected with him. The Shandy family is composed of original types; its members, and those who come into contact with them, are seen to be related among themselves and with the author. They all possess an oddity allied to a naturalness, and are gifted with an inner vitality that overcomes the resistance of judgment, and imposes the feeling of reality through the saving grace of our sympathy; but their outlines are keyed up to an extremely intense pitch; indeed, they only escape being caricatures by the geniality with which they are instinct. Dickens will remember these types.

Among the aspects of this philosophy and the devices of this humour, there are some which by their constant reappearance come to acquire an obsessing relief: those which touch upon the animality in human nature. The physiological reactions subjacent to the sentiments and acts of which polite society refuses to recognize anything save the spiritual side, the reverse of the emotions, the passions, and of life itself, haunt Sterne to such an extent as to clothe the whole of his work in a strange colouring of refined brutality and intellectual cynicism. This moral attitude is of a piece with that which in the *Sentimental Journey* concerns itself so minutely with the most imperceptible bestirrings of the senses. There is nothing here that resembles the great broad laugh of Rabelais; it is like a relish for ambiguity indulged in for its own sake; it is a sly irreverence which, without ever saying anything, insinuates everything. One is tempted to see in it a craving for truth, a stubborn frankness of spirit which covers itself up, or pretends to do so, behind the superficial reticence and prudery of the world, and gains in addition a comic value from this transparent mask. The vision of the contrast, as a rule hypocritically hidden, between the moral being and the brute in man, would therefore be at the root of all this order of pleasantry; a vision at bottom bitter, tragic, and closely allied to Christian pessimism. But beside this moral concern, it is impossible not to see in it all a certain obsessing mania, some indelicacy, and some perversity pure and simple.

With time the art of Sterne developed towards a more perfect sureness of touch. The *Sentimental Journey* is of a much more concentrated and sober form, of a purer line, than *Tristram Shandy;* and it cannot be said that the matter has become poorer, for the impressions and the episodes of this sojourn in France allow a reflection that is always alert to indulge in a constant meditation upon life. The manners and character of the French occupy the foreground; and Sterne, certainly, has not seen all, or understood all he saw; his liberty of judgment is only relative; but it is remarkable, and his psychological interpretation is often of a penetrating accuracy. A series of small vignettes, finished with exquisite care, all full of subtle intentions, whence emanates a somewhat morbid, and yet ironical sentiment; where is displayed the quivering sense of the finest shades, together with a kind of persistent coarseness of attention—this is the work of a master writer, who has not yet been surpassed either in the finished polish of the detail, or in the handling of suggestion, though the labour itself and the concentration detract from the spontaneity of the whole.

With their episodes of travel bathed in complacent emotion, their essential subjectivism, their language fully charged with implicitness—are not such pages as these already romantic? They are still very far from being so. Sterne's sentimentalism, which commands itself, is a new resource exploited by a severe and intellectual art; imagination here, while constantly put to contribution, is a servant and not a master; the outer world only furnishes elements that have been carefully chosen, and what is felt is immediately fashioned into thought. However free the style may be, it has not in any way thrown off the discipline of classicism; almost everything is merely understood, but the words are not instinct with an expressive force that in itself is indefinite and vague; they are not pregnant with music.

The sentimental novel, with Sterne, escapes from the control of the particular needs of the middle-class spirit; it proclaims that sentiment, which has become a source of enjoyment, and an end in itself, will henceforth be liberated from ethics. It thus constitutes a stage on the road now opened up, and leading to Romanticism.

To be consulted: *Cambridge History of English Literature,* vol. x. chaps. i., iii., ix.; Cross, *Development of the English Novel,* 1899; Idem, *Life and Times of Sterne,* 1909; Dobson, *Life of Goldsmith,* 1888; Idem, *Richardson* (English Men of Letters), 1902; Schmidt, *Richardson, Rousseau und Goethe,* 1875; Sichel, *Sterne,* etc., 1910; Texte, *J.-J. Rousseau et les origines du cosmopolitisme littéraire,* 1895; Thayer, *L. Sterne in Germany,* 1905; C. Thomson, *Richardson,* 1900.

CHAPTER IV

REALISM

1. Realism and the Modern English Mind.—By the side of the novel of sentiment, the realistic novel develops. The two forms are not separated by any real opposition. They have some common traits, and are varieties of one and the same species.

Realism was already in existence; it had been the first to appear; De Foe had given it a very definite expression. The middle-class spirit and the classical mind were both favourable to it; and such instinctive bents of attention as might seem to contradict it, in this age as in the future, are seen to admit of it freely enough. Something which is the English mind itself, this general temperament in which the diverse tendencies of the extreme types are fused together, shows that henceforth it is bound up with it by a sure and constant affinity. The access of the middle classes to social influence had allowed this psychological mean, this average temper, to work itself out. The outstanding representative value of Fielding lies in the fact that he is widely and completely in harmony with it.

Fielding's first novel, *Joseph Andrews,* is the outcome of a conscious reaction against the first novel of Richardson, *Pamela.* But realism does not result from a reaction against sentimentalism; it continues to exist, only stimulated to a new and more aggressive affirmation of itself by the excess of an art in which the exigencies of Puritanism introduced a narrow and morbid view of human nature. Fielding, in fact, scoffed at Richardson, but knew also how to do him justice; he did not want to stand over against him as an antithesis, but rather to improve upon him; he has certain essential instincts in common with him; and the course of his life, together with his work, drew the two writers together.

As compared with Richardson, he represents not only a complementary type of mind, but a more normal and sound one. His desire is to give sentiment its right place; but also to integrate it in an organic series of tendencies, where each contributes to maintain a mutual balance. Beside what is an extreme type, he stands not for the other extreme, but for the synthesis, the practical and the most stable form. His realism unites the most common desires of the new society in England: the taste for the concrete, the need to see it without illusion in order not to feel any surprise or disappointment when acting upon it and co-operating with it; the resolution not to sacrifice the several elements of the human being one to another, and to know at times how to feel a soft emotion, when it is useful that the soul should be softened. And this is why Fielding has been recognised by England as one of the most profoundly national of its writers.

His realism is of a moderate quality, and does not go to the excess of a bitter preference for the cruel truths which convention neglects. His pursuit of reality never was prompted by rancour or hatred. On this point, Smollett, his contemporary, differs from him. Temperamental motives, personal impulses, lead away the author of *Roderick Random* from this middle line, and bring him to an intentional harshness, a crudeness of description, in which a set purpose is revealed, and which call to mind the pessimistic realism of the nineteenth century.

2. Fielding.—Fielding's[1] desire is to depict things as he sees them; and his vision is not that of Richardson. The lights and shades over the prospect of the moral world are not distributed in the same way for him. His personal experience is somewhat mixed; he allows us to gather the fact from his work the more readily, as a certain easy indulgence in manners is not foreign to the notion he entertains of a character that has been formed by life. The drama that Richardson has woven round a feminine virtue, too skilful not to be calculating, seems to Fielding more immodest than edifying; to generalise this attitude and this spirit, is to turn conduct into an affair of slyly interested prudence. In the principles thus proclaimed, there is a too strained and somewhat chimerical austerity; while in the reality of the inner self are hidden movements of the natural being, which repression only aggravates instead of attenuating. Such is the serious element underlying the parody which lends to Joseph, Pamela's brother, all the merits of his sister, and ridicules a line of conduct by extending it. The theme was easy, and *Joseph Andrews* might well have remained a novel of very limited scope, had it not quickly lost sight of its starting point.

Without caring for abstract thought in itself, Fielding is a philosopher; he believes in principles; and his work is the clear and abundant illustration of his ethics. *Tom Jones* is a long didactic treatise on the diverse quality of souls, and their different reaction to experience. Some people are born good, others bad, but in most cases each has a mixture of good and evil. It is not difficult to separate the examples to be followed from those which must be rejected, or to recognise in oneself which instincts to cultivate and which to destroy. A spontaneous generosity of heart, a simple frankness, a sincere sense of goodness, are the precious germs of all real virtues. Wherever they develop, the exuberance of a rich nature will be able at times to cover them up, to conceal them; but the only true morality is the fruit of their growth, however obstructed this may be. As for all the rest—sophistic doctrines, rules of conduct based on pure reason or on the metaphysical fitness of things, Puritan austerity, the deceitful effort of a soured conscience to vest itself in innocent sweetness—it is only lies. Immense is the task of the moralising novelist, as the social domain of false pretension. This he shall paint, and from his very painting laughter will rise, for the unique source of the ridiculous is affectation, and this is made up of vanity or hypocrisy.

There is thus a set purpose in the writings of Fielding; like Richardson, his desire is to instruct; but in place of a sentimentality which to him is hollow, his tales will inspire a virile soundness of character. An art so full of its high calling takes care to justify its method. Fielding is steeped to the very marrow with classical culture. His keenest concern is to found his practice upon the examples of the Ancients. The novel of manners is not as yet aware of its own tradition, which is only just incipient. Bunyan, De Foe, Addison and Steele are precedents that are too scattered, and in too many respects different, to offer the mind a picture of continued progress. Richardson's *Pamela* is cast in a particular mould, and its feverish pathos makes it something far other than a model for Fielding. He believes therefore that in writing *Joseph Andrews*, he can derive encouragement only from the literatures of the Ancients. Here again, it is through parody that classicism seeks to reconcile the vitality of thought and the loyalty to a principle of imitation. While the new work is intended to rouse laughter, it will not be a comedy, since it will have a wide grasp of all the aspects of reality, of which pure comedy takes in but one side. By the breadth of its scope it will recall the epic, while by its tonality it will recall the burlesque. It will therefore be a "comic epic in prose." It is under this rather strange definition that the first work is presented in which the modern novel has the full liberty of its form.

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[1] Henry Fielding, born in Somersetshire in 1707, of an aristocratic family, studied at Eton and in Leyden; wrote for the stage from 1728 to 1737 (see below, chap. vi.), pursued his law studies, collaborated in a periodical, *The Champion* (1739–41), and published in 1742 a parody of *Pamela: The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews, and of His Friend Mr. Abraham Adams.* Then appeared three volumes of *Miscellanies*, containing poems, a phantasy, *A Journey from This World to the Next*, and a satirical novel, *The Life of Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great*, 1743. He wrote against the Pretender (*The True Patriot*, 1745); was appointed a judge in London, and acquitted himself of his duties with much zeal; found time to write two novels, *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling*, 1749, and *Amelia*, 1751. Then in 1752 he edited a periodical, *The Covent Garden Journal*, but his health gave way; he set out for Lisbon, and died there in 1754, leaving behind an account of his *Voyage*, which was published in 1755. *Works*, ed. by Saintsbury, 1893; ed. by Gosse, 1899; the novels were published in Everyman's Library, etc. *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon*, ed. by Dobson, World's Classics; *Covent Garden Journal*, ed. by Jensen, 1916. See Dobson, *Fielding* (English Men of Letters), 1907; Godden, *H. Fielding*, 1910; Cross, *The History of Henry Fielding*, 1919; Digeon, *Les Romans de Fielding*, 1923; Idem, *Le Texte des Romans de Fielding*, 1923.

Tom Jones bristles with theories. At the beginning of each part or almost, a general chapter of doctrine is prominently placed. The author there disserts with an abundance that would be pedantic, if it were not enlivened by humour and an engaging frankness. He thus takes the trouble to show us that this "history of a life" enjoys the privilege of choosing between facts, and of eliminating what is useless; that the discussions of ideas introduce a pleasing variety into the whole. And in order not to fall short of the epic definition he upholds, Fielding strews his narrative with laboriously developed mock-heroic comparisons.

All these trappings weigh heavily upon the work, and would crush it completely if it did not possess so strong a vigour. Underneath them, and often against them, the temperament of Fielding keeps following its own law. The novel as he conceives it is a large grouping together of parallel actions, which are set around a few main individual destinies at stake, and in their collectivity, and in the varied lesson that emanates from each, give an exact and instructive image of life. The field it embraces is therefore vast; the personages are very numerous; the plot is shifted freely through time and space, under the reserve of probability, and within the limits of the hero's existence; the most diverse social surroundings are studied or touched upon in passing. In a word, the manifold elements composing the story must be subservient to a philosophical unity, built up out of the experience itself of a human existence, out of the judgment of a gradually matured mind on the theatre in which it is at once a spectator and an actor. No form of art is more suited to the tastes and needs of the modern public; above all, perhaps, of the English public. This formula, which serves realism and ethics at one and the same time, will henceforth remain, with slight or serious qualifications and changes, the law of this literary kind, or of its most important variety.

The novel of Fielding is too natural an outcome of the moral instincts of the society of the day, and of the work of literary preparation that had already been accomplished, to require any explaining by way of distant influences. Something of the impulse that produces *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones* is derived from *Don Quixote*, that source of humour and irony without bitterness which the English genius has never ceased to put to contribution. French novels, the *Roman Comique* of Scarron, the *Roman Bourgeois* of Furetière, the *Marianne* and the *Paysan Parvenu* of Marivaux, may have stimulated or guided this creative intuition, without our being able to estimate precisely their action. But the effect of the picaresque tradition is certainly to be felt in Fielding, as in his contemporary Smollett. The philosophical unity with which he wants to stamp his work is not so strong as the spirit of diversity and adventure. *Joseph Andrews* is very loosely put together. Of a much closer compactness, the framework of *Tom Jones* is not of a perfect texture; a long tale of adventitious interest is still grafted into the story.

The quality of the realism in these novels assures them a precious documentary value. Town manners, the pleasures and amusements of the capital, country society organised round the squire, and where the vicar occupies, for a time, a singularly less dignified place; stagecoaches, inns, and the incidents of the road, the underworld of vice and crime, have here left traces sufficiently accurate in themselves to be of use to the historian. As a magistrate, Fielding knows well the conflicts of the penal codes and the instincts; he recounts them with the exactitude of a well-informed witness, and the zeal of a reformer. For he has a generous conception of justice; no doubt, his ideas on the right to punish, on the responsibility of the criminal, on the social régime, do not go beyond the range of vision of his time; but he quickens them through the susceptibility of a noble conscience; he has felt and shown the cruelty of certain legal punishments, the scandals of judicial administration. His calm, objective work is at times animated by a humane ardour, just as the independence of his thought does not stop at the inequalities which his age deemed necessary.

Fielding has that broad, tolerant nature, that faculty of moral observation, that curiosity of life for itself, which usually go to make the creators of characters. He had written comedies; the play of personalities in contact with each other, striving the one against the other, interested and amused him; he has known how to come out of himself, how to endow imaginary creatures with real life. His novels have popularised types that retain their hold upon the English public. But the figures he has drawn are of very unequal value. A fairly large number bear the traces of a didactic intention or of a strong bias; despite the concrete traits given them by the humour of the writer, they have a certain air of artificiality or of theoretical invention: such are Allworthy, the man wise and master of himself, who is not at times without recalling Grandison; and Blifil, the stage hypocrite. The hero of *Tom Jones,* a fine fellow without malice, and Sophia his charming fiancée, have always appealed to British hearts; it is difficult for a foreign reader not to show them a rather cold esteem, and this not without some injustice, because their superficial banality hides a naturalness that is both solid and true. This banality is due to their very harmony with national preferences which have since been often asserted, and which under more refined exigencies, are to-day still to be felt. But a Parson Adams, a Squire Western, are creations of admirable vigour, of lively and attractive colouring; the heroine of *Amelia* is truly touching; in these personages, the invention of Fielding has spent itself without following any other laws, save that of adhering to the organic interrelations between the elements of character; and this by starting out from an intuitively known reality, which he found either in himself, or in those beings whose lives were interwoven with his own, or in social types of intense relief, and very closely observed.

The wealth of his genius, so human in itself, and whose development was cut off by too premature a death, remains a subject of astonishment. His last novel reveals quite a change in his manner of writing; a matureness, a softening, a progress towards delicacy, which temper an inspiration at times a trifle crude without weakening it in any way. *Amelia* gives us a more inviting image of the world, in which feminine goodness redeems and corrects many an error; and one could be led to perceive in the intention behind this picture a more marked fondness of heart for that ideal of sentiment which Fielding had treated, in his early works, with ironical mistrust. He drew nearer to Richardson, just as Richardson never ceased to think of him. The realism of *Amelia* is homely and intimate, and announces Rousseau and Goldsmith. Relieved as it is of all epic pretension, and giving itself out more simply for what it is, strong in the profundity and solidity of the theme it treats—conjugal relations after the tastes of English middle-class society—with more life in its dialogues, more rapidity in its narrative, this novel would be Fielding's masterpiece, if it had not, on the other hand, its weak points in construction, and if *Tom Jones* did not retain the advantage of an incomparable robustness.

It is also a more sober, unadorned art, a lightness of touch which at times attains to grace, and the turn of an easy style, that assure their original place to less substantial writings, such as the *Journey from This World to the Next*, an unequal work, which at certain moments makes one think of Voltaire, as much as of Lucian. *Jonathan Wild* is on a superior level; not that the subject is new: the theme of the reversing of social situations and moral values had already often been dealt with; it is at the centre of that vein of parody which runs through the very core of the classical age. But the condensed irony, the self-mastery, the mental liberty heightened by the implicit violence of the thwarted passion, have here a power that recalls and equals Swift. The last work of Fielding—the account of his *Voyage to Lisbon*—is of a different note; it has a taking charm where the melancholy of an approaching end commingles with the gaiety of a still sarcastic reflection, and with the generosity of a still elevated mind.

3. Smollett.—The realism of Smollett[1] is of quite another artistic tonality, as the group of moral tendencies with which it is connected is of a different nature. The search for truth in the description of the world here retains, no doubt, something intellectual; Smollett also is a classicist by his culture, as by the general trend of his thought; but his classicism is of a less pure quality; the imperious demands of a very personal temperament bring into it a number of divergent elements. In certain respects his work moves with the general development of literature. It has nothing, however, that can be described as really romantic; nothing in it presages the decisive renovation of the methods of art.[2]

An inner grudge against life, together with the need of soothing a pride that has been hurt, count for much in the impulse which prompts the writing of his first novel. Smollett harbours the grievances of the Scot against the Southerner, of the poor young writer against the indifferent public, the disdainful and stingy patrons. The theatrical directors refused his tragedy; he had only a mediocre success as a doctor; on a man of war, he took part in a disastrous expedition. The pains of many wounds go to the making of a deep rancour, which inveighs not only against those who were responsible, but also against the society that protects them, and against humanity as a whole. An aggrieved disposition, a raw susceptibility, a sarcastic turn of mind, an aridness—at least exterior—in sentiment, are the prominent characteristics of this moral figure. A chronic irritability is the result. To show things as they are, and give full measure to the ugly aspects of life, will be to taste a cruel pleasure in tearing down the veils of deception; and perhaps the vision of evil will bring men to desire something better. This revenge upon the universe justifies itself in its own eyes under the name of courageous and sound frankness. It remains sufficiently in control of its powers to give itself often the benefit of humour.

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[1] Tobias George Smollett, born in Scotland (1721), studied at Glasgow, adopted a medical career and was attached as surgeon to a warship; but after several literary attempts (a tragedy, *The Regicide*, which no one would stage; two satires, *Advice* and *Reproof*, etc.), the success of his first novel, *The Adventures of Roderick Random*, 1748, decided his vocation, although he did not abandon medicine. He translated *Gil Blas* (1749), published two new novels (*The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle*, 1751; *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom*, 1752), compiled or corrected works for publishers (notably a *History of England*, 1757–65; the *Present State of All Nations*, 1768–9; a translation of *Voltaire*, etc., while writing a farce, *The Reprisal, or The Tars of Old England*, 1757, a novel, the *Adventures of Sir Launcelot Greaves*, 1760, and numerous critical articles. Worn out in health, he travelled on the Continent in 1763–5, and from his impressions drew the material for his *Travels through France and Italy*, 1756. His last works were novels: *The History and Adventures of an Atom*, 1769; and *The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker*, 1771, the latter being written in Italy, where he died near Leghorn in 1771. *Works*, ed. by Saintsbury, 1895; *Travels*, etc., ed. by Seccombe, 1901. See Hanney, *Smollett* (Great Writers), 1887; Smeaton, *Smollett*, 1897; Robinson, *The British Tar in Fact and Fiction*, 1909.

[2] In his curious novel: *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom*, Smollett appears, however, to have appreciated the possibility of a new literary and psychological agent: terror (Preface).

This state of mind is that of the satirist. Smollett indeed wrote satires, vigorous in their inspiration and declamatory in their form. But it is only in prose that he is a poet; his language, often vivid and concrete, has at times a force of expressive eloquence; the tremor of an overstrung sensibility raises it in places to a sort of harsh, short-lived lyricism. It is in his novels that he has expressed himself. To a much greater extent than Fielding, he has voiced his personality in his work. Roderick Random offers the transposed picture of the hard years of his own youth; Matthew Bramble, an idealisation of his softened old age.

He borrows the framework of his stories from the picaresque tales of adventure. He translates *Gil Blas,* and is fully aware of his indebtedness. He also translates *Don Quixote,* the central theme of which he imitates in his *Launcelot Greaves.* But a more feeble imitation could not be found. With Le Sage he compares more honourably; instead of an ironical light-hearted scepticism, it is a corrosive humour that impregnates the succession of scenes, incidents and episodes which the hero traverses on his way to a provisional or final destiny. Smollett leads his Roderick, his Peregrine, even the criminal Count Fathom, to final happiness, fortune and virtue. His moral and sentimental outlook is not of the most delicate, as is shown in the love scenes and indicated in many other ways; his claim—sincere, it is true—of writing moralising works, is supported by a dénouement that is happy and conformable with popular taste. For despite fiercely personal moods and impulses, he is rather easily and submissively in harmony with certain commonplace conventions. His nature does not develop in depth. Very sensitive to the external aspect of things, he has a less appreciative understanding of souls, and his realism is above all of the physical and descriptive order.

While *Peregrine Pickle* is less strained, less violent and of a more careful art than *Roderick Random,* its composition is just as loose; and the ferocity of Smollett's first novel has a concentrated ardour, and its verve possesses a savour, which give to the book a superior intensity of character. This remains his most solid literary claim.

Smollett does not offer us so large a picture of society in its entirety as Fielding. More errant still, the career of his heroes leads us through spectacles of greater diversity; he unfolds to our gaze many vistas of the picturesque aspects of life, but the link that unites them is superficial; the strong social organisation of Fielding's works has no equivalent here. It is in his precise study of particular circles that Smollett triumphs. He has skilfully made use of his technical knowledge of certain professions, medicine for example, or of original types such as sailors. His sea dogs have a rich jovial picturesqueness, and their language has a saltish flavour; the pen that etches them in just sufficiently oversteps reality to merge slightly into caricature, without however wounding that instinct of truth which common sense sets against false creations. Commodore Trunnion and Lieutenant Bowling had only had mere character sketches as predecessors in English literature, but they have had numberless successors; they retain the ever fresh quality of the figures that synthetise in a striking manner a special province of life's variety.

Other episodical personages stand out in relief, a relief that is often the more striking, as their being is summed up for us in one brief vision, so that nothing is allowed to blur the exterior outline by which they are defined. But the heroes themselves of these novels of adventure are disappointing, for there is nothing here to replace the absent psychological study. The conception of Fathom—a type of villain—might have been interesting; it proceeds from a praiseworthy desire for renovation. But Smollett himself scarcely takes him seriously, and destroys any illusion on the part of the reader by expressing the regret of having ever imagined so black a soul! As for Random and Pickle, who are described to us as sympathetic, it is difficult to find them so. It would perhaps be unjust to reproach them with their mediocrity, for the picaresque class of writing demands average characters, and one has readily been grateful to a more modern naturalism for having had the courage to admit that the average individual is mediocre. But this courage supposes a conscious will to art and philosophy, which it does not seem possible to attribute to Smollett. However indignant he may be against human nature in the abstract, he has shown a weakness for it as exemplified in his heroes; and the disagreeable truth appears to be that their moral insensibility, their indelicacy, and even at times their wickedness, were not intended by him as the consequence of a systematic purpose, but are the effect of a certain lack of perception. The faults which he wanted to give them are not by any means the gravest that we actually find in them.

The last novel of Smollett occupies a place apart in his work. *Humphrey Clinker* unites the influences which a versatile talent had undergone, while following an autonomous development: that of Fielding, who taught him how better to construct an action and a character; that of Sterne, who had shown what a wealth of humour lay in the introversion and dividing, so to say, of self; and one must also add that of Richardson, for *Humphrey Clinker* is written in the epistolary form. Above all, the book bears the trace of the inner progress of a soured personality towards peace, of a negative mind towards a more discriminating sense of things. The idea of the essential relativity of human opinions, which in itself is a source of tolerance, took possession of Smollett to such a degree that he organised his action round it: the same facts turn up again under the pen of different correspondents, and are explained each time in a different way. Richardson had had recourse to this device; but the consecutive use to which it is here put is of a very strong philosophical interest. An attention that is turned towards the angle of vision particular to each personage would of course tend towards the intimate analysis of each, and so the psychology of the novel is more carefully studied.

There are still, certainly, episodes of a very uncouth verve; the plot is again weak, while the comic inventiveness which spends itself in creating the maid Jenkins or Lieutenant Lismahago is not of the highest order. The work has qualities that are unexpected, and please the more; at the same time, it is not without showing in a way Smollett's old defects. On the other hand, it reveals more clearly the background of human kindness which had been hidden by the aggressive pessimism of the first works, and which was only perceptible at rare moments. Not only does Smollett, like Fielding, allow himself to be won over by a contagious sentiment, but just as the other he shows a true compassion for the victims of society. Matthew Bramble, in whom the author has put much of himself, is a kind of surly humanitarian. Here realism culminates in philanthropy—an alliance that is to be fruitful. Taken up again and carried further at a later date, it will serve the lasting success of realism in England.

To be consulted: A. Blum, *Hogarth*, 1923; *Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. x. chap. ii.; Cross, *Development of the English Novel*, 1899; Idem, *The History of Henry Fielding*, 1919; Digeon, *Les Romans de Fielding*, 1923; Dobson, *Fielding* (English Men of Letters), 1907; Péronne, *Englische Zustände ins xviii Jahrhundert nach den Romanen von Fielding und Smollett*, 1890; Raleigh, *The English Novel*, 1894; Thackeray, *English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century*, 1853; Wershoven, *Smollett et Lesage*, 1883.

CHAPTER V

POLITICAL LITERATURE

1. Political Unrest after 1750.—The classical age coincided with a relatively stable order in society. Upon close examination, no doubt, the epoch of Queen Anne and of the first two Hanoverian rulers is anything but quiet; a war of intrigues, cabals, individual rivalry and party struggles, pursues its course almost without a break. But this unrest is inseparable from the régime which the English nation had chosen for itself, and in which we find strong oligarchical tendencies combining with the surviving forces of personal power, according to a variable formula, in a general framework of the parliamentary type. The elements of disturbance represented by the hidden menace of the Jacobites, by the open practice of corruption and by the violence of Walpole's enemies, do not destroy the character of a period in which a regular movement, without any serious jolt, develops and establishes the results of the Revolution of 1688. The new middle-class influences become more and more fused with the still intact authority of the aristocracy; and the course of things will continue in this way until the moment when, towards the end of the century, the slow upheaval caused by the great industrial growth will make itself felt.

But this atmosphere of calm, which is only relative, leaves room for a surging unrest of a rather serious nature when, shortly after the middle of the century, the accession of George III. brings with it the end of the Whig régime. The House of Hanover tries to regain a little of the prestige it has lost; it enters into conflict with a system of government which tends to exclude it; the rights of the monarch, those of the subjects, ministerial privileges, the attributes of Parliament, have all to be determined by a series of laborious adaptations; outside the country the secular duel between England and France attains one of its decisive moments; naval supremacy is at stake; and lastly, the thorny problem of the opposition between the interests of Great Britain and the susceptible independence of her colonies now reveals itself. Public life traverses a phase of unrest as varied as it is profound, which is reflected in the thought of the time either by a pessimism, or by the active desire for national reform and regeneration.

In this atmosphere, political conviction and passion are one of the most fecund stimulants of literary creation. Motives for strife had never been lacking, and in the preceding generation Swift had turned such themes to incomparable use. For a brief space, they again become one of the dominant forces of inspiration.

This literature is still classical in form, and scarcely departs in spirit from classicism. But it owes to the vivacity and spontaneity of the sentiments which give birth to it something that is more sincere and more direct. Prose is enlivened by a vehemence which fertilises the rhetoric of language; a form of poetry which was dying—satire in verse—is again animated by a living object. The slow and gradual evolution towards Romanticism owes a stage of its progress to the "patriotism" of Junius, Churchill and Chatham, as to all the reawakening sources of genuine sentiment.

2. Wilkes, Junius.—The years which precede and follow the accession of George III. (1760) witness an increase in the swarming numbers of pamphleteers and political journalists. Men of letters are enlisted to defend the prerogatives of the Sovereign: Smollett is put in charge of the *Briton;* others set up for the "country's" advocates against the court; in the *North Briton,* Wilkes[1] supports the case of the opposition.

The figure of Wilkes is of very great historical interest. His literary work would not in itself have sufficed to raise him above his rivals. He owes his place in the national memory of the English people to the independence, prone to be aggressive, of a conduct and a language, the sincerity of which is at times and to some people a little questionable. The scandals of his life, and the boldness of his opinions, called forth against him from many of his contemporaries a reprobation that was not dispelled after his death. This agitator, however, with his powerful fertility of verve, represented for a brief time the cause of a constitutional liberty to which the British instinct is still attached. His gifts are second-rate. He is talented as a polemist, knows how to handle irony and insult, how to appeal to the susceptibilities of his public; but his facility has no depth, nor his style any personality.

The value of the famous letters of "Junius"[2] is of quite another order.

The mystery which enshrouded them, and which has not yet been cleared up, counts for something in their unique prestige. If their effectiveness has not been quite what their author desired, they played, nevertheless, a part in the social development of the time; they constitute a document for the historian. But their most precious claim lies in themselves. They remain one of the highest achievements in polemical literature.

Efforts have been made to disparage the inspiration which animates them. It is certainly not irreproachable. Junius writes, not only on behalf of principles, and against facts or tendencies, but against men; he writes for others, and it has been possible to connect his work with the political interests of a definite group. The personal touch in the object of his attacks, and in the doctrine which prompts them, introduces therein some particular and arbitrary elements. His hostility is too stubborn not to be impassioned, and too impassioned to remain just; the movement of his eloquent logic represents too vigorous an impulse not to become, at a certain moment, an autonomous force, independent of reason or conscience. His indictments too often overshoot their mark; they leave all charitable feeling behind, and even truth itself. Those who to-day are still hurt by the arguments he propounds have no trouble in seeing and showing that he is a cruel and unscrupulous sophist. But if one examines his work leaving aside every prejudice, it quivers with a moral emotion which one cannot refuse to characterise as noble. The loftiness of the thought and language is not pompous affectation, but true elevation. The keen concern for the public welfare, an ardent patriotism, the religion of liberty are the ever-living soul of these accents. And the courage of a struggle which had its risks, despite an anonymity that was with difficulty kept up, just as this anonymity itself, preserved until the end and entailing the loss of any remunerative fame to the unknown author, all point to a self-effacement, a sincere sacrifice to duty.

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[1] John Wilkes, born in London in 1727, the son of a brewer, after a youth of dissipation, entered Parliament, launched the *North Briton* (1762–3), was prosecuted for his attacks against the person of the King (No. 45), and formed the centre of one of the most important episodes in the political strife then ensuing. Suspended three times from Parliament, he finally resumed his seat as a victor, and died in 1797, at peace with the powers in authority. *Correspondence,* 1805. See P. Fitzgerald, *Life and Times of W.,* 1888; Treloar, *W. and the City,* 1917.

[2] From January, 1769, until the end of 1771 there appeared in the *Public Advertiser* letters signed Junius (or often Philo-Junius, Lucius, Brutus, etc.), in which was felt all the irresistible force of personality of one and the same correspondent, already in evidence, during the course of the two preceding years, in irregular contributions to this or other papers. The action of Junius, which at times found itself in agreement with that of the friends of Wilkes, was nevertheless quite distinct; directed principally against the Duke of Grafton and the North ministry, it preserved an individuality of its own. A collection of the letters appeared in 1772; often reprinted, it grew in dimensions in 1812, 1850, etc. The identity of Junius is still obscure; after countless controversies and conjectures the prevailing opinion seems to attribute the letters to Sir Philip Francis (1740–1818), born in Ireland, an important official at the War Office from 1762 to 1772, then attached to the Indian Administration, the sworn enemy of Warren Hastings, and a member of Parliament. See H. R. Francis, *Junius Revealed,* 1894; Smith, *Junius Unveiled,* 1909, etc.

Such an attitude is modelled upon the stoicism of antiquity, and in fact everything with Junius breathes the conscious imitation of the political idealism of the Romans. Classicism, which is now a withering force in literature, thus comes to be reinfused with vitality in the civic domain. Here one can perceive, through the disturbed but normal working of public life in England, something of that action of the themes and memories of ancient times upon the imaginations, which was to occupy so great a place in the French Revolution. On the other hand, while Junius claims as an example the republicanism of a Brutus, and exalts the sovereignty of the people to the point of reminding King George of the fate of Charles I., his doctrine is still distinctly British; he has the feeling for national tradition, for the growth of institutions, for precedents; his work testifies to a mind trained in the school of law, and to a very full learning. The liberty he champions is constitutional; he calls for a union of citizens against the foreigner. His thought is an idealised expression of the average social instincts of the middle class.

The eloquence of Junius reveals a strong and cultured temperament, which has gleaned from the lessons of the classics the best they have to offer. He has the gift of vigour, neatness and sarcasm; his mind at will grasps a point of fact, a legal problem, and throws upon them a light that is visible immediately and to all; he discusses and orders arguments with sovereign ease; a scholarly sense of balance, an acquired rhetoric, both discipline and increase these natural qualities. He has the brilliant epigrammatic turn, the moral maxim, in the manner of Seneca, but without monotony; he knows how to construct a Ciceronian period, but the tenor of his style is sober; the short sentence predominates. With the variety of tones which it can adopt—spirited, insistent, calm, ironical, violently offensive—this force is always master of itself, can hold itself in check, and govern itself with surprising success. Few English writers have been able to effect this difficult combination in language of vehement expression with a propriety of terms that would be absolute, were it not that the taste of the time, the mark of the century, manifest themselves in something more abstract and solemn than perfect simplicity would demand.

3. Poetry: Churchill.—Churchill[1] was a writer of free irregular habits, like Wilkes, whose friend he was; but he died young, and never experienced the sobering process of years. His short life, his moral independence, the intense character of his talent, lend him some of the external traits of Romanticism. At a time when men of letters take their place within the normal frame of society, he links up with the tradition of the semi-rebels, that was broken off after the Otways and the Lees.

His is a liberty of temperament and of instinct, with nothing in it that could emancipate the doctrine and conscious practice of poetry, or restore to sentimental inspiration all its rights. The work of Churchill does not effect, or attempt to effect, any deep renewal of the object and the methods of art. His first important poem, the *Rosciad,* where we have evidence of a virility already personal, is quite full of the influence of Pope in its epigrams, in its antithetical balancing, and sharp conciseness. Next, the need he experiences for variety, for sincerity, leads him in a backward direction, rather than towards the future. An affinity of nature makes him prefer Dryden to Pope. His heroic couplet, vigorous and of spontaneous flow, resembles in its ease and sonority that of *The Medal* and *Absalom.* When he seeks to escape from this mould of poetic expression, it is to the octosyllabic line of *Hudibras* that he reverts, but with rather mediocre success. He eloquently denounces all that savours of imitation, stereotyped writing and standard ideas.

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[1] Charles Churchill, born in 1731, the son of a clergyman, studied at Westminster School and Cambridge, took orders, but neglected his ecclesiastical duties for a careless life of pleasure; wrote satires in verse, and became famous with the success of his *Rosciad* (1761); took part in the political strife, formed a friendship with Wilkes, collaborated actively in the *North Briton*, and died at the age of 32 (1764), not without having produced many other poems: *The Apology, Night*, 1761; *The Prophecy of Famine*, 1763; the *Epistle to William Hogarth*, 1763; *The Duellist*, and *Gotham*, 1764. *Poetical Works*, ed. by Hannay and Tooke, 1892. See Courthope, *Hist. of English Poetry*, vol. v., 1905; Putschi, *Ch. Churchill*, Vienna, 1909.

This return to the former and true state of an inspiration now become artificial is like an obscure intuition, that voices a presentiment. In Churchill there is an innovator unknown to himself, a man whom his brief career, and the atmosphere of an age that is still unfavourable, will not allow to become aware of himself. He believes that he is tending towards the forcefulness of a spontaneous classicism, rediscovered beneath the fatigue of a declining art. This aspiration is already pregnant with a spirit which will be that of the new literature. From all his work there emanates an air of impatience and of scorn for rules which fetter poets as with paralysing bonds. He has the feeling for, experiences the urgent need of a new beauty created by the writer; he is the sworn enemy of the critics, as of order and authority. And like the Romanticists of a later date, he has within him a vein of moral insurrection, a daring spirit of outspokenness which revolts against "prudence," that mother of despicable and calculating virtues; a kind of half-serious individualism which culminates—another resemblance—in an apology of free living, of the "vie de bohème." . . .

This apostle of nature in art lacked what Wordsworth will possess: inspiration warm enough to melt the frigidness of the language, purify the simple words in the flame of emotion, and infuse them with movement and life. His frame of mind is still too intellectual, too cold, despite the violence of the style; it is also too superficial, too combative, too attentive to outward things, to personal or party strife. The satire of Churchill is never raised by the highest emotions. But it is not devoid of feeling; the sensibility therein revealed has its moments of youthfulness and touching naïvety; it remains sound, in spite of its braggart boldness.

In the very uneven quality of his work, there are portions of superior merit. No invective surpasses in furious energy of expression the *Epistle to Hogarth. The Prophecy of Famine* represents a more balanced art, with a picturesque and stirring verve. *Gotham,* an original poem, which strangely foreshadows Cowper, is full of a kind of virtual romanticism that uplifts and animates the rhythm of the rhymed couplet. The best passages in Churchill have the stamp of a master touch, a happy fullness, a decisive aptness.

4. Eloquence: Chatham.—In these years of unrest, political eloquence attains an already brilliant stage of development with Chatham.[1]

The publication of any literal account of Parliamentary debates was forbidden by law. The first speeches of Chatham come to us in the form of summaries;[1] we can be sure of their general intent, but not of their words. The reporting of sittings is tolerated after 1771, and from that date we can base our judgment on more authentic texts.

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[1] William Pitt, born in 1708, came of gentry stock, studied at Oxford, entered Parliament in 1735 as member for the "rotten borough" of Old Sarum, and joined the Opposition against Walpole; Secretary of State in 1756, he directed affairs at the most brilliant moment in the war with France. Dismissed by George III., then recalled to power, and created Earl of Chatham (1766), he fell a victim to a nervous malady which forced him into retirement. He came forward, however, to denounce the political error committed with respect to the American colonies, and died after a final oratorical effort in 1778. *Speeches,* 1853. See Green, *Chatham,* 1901; Williams, *Life of Chatham,* 1913.

It is about this time that the last and greatest period opens in the political life of Chatham, that in which he sees the prestige of the triumphs over which he had presided fade away in the disasters and errors of the struggle with America. A stirring ardour, a keen pathos animate his language; it is still saturated in classical memories, shows order, harmony, and neatness of turn; more ornate than that of Demosthenes, a contemporary says, it is less diffuse than that of Cicero. . . . His vehemence dominates and governs itself in absolute liberty. It displays a slightly conscious nobleness, a sometimes over-elaborate choice. But this rhetoric is instinct with a bitter passion, a painful patriotism; one feels in it the tremor of the wounded pride of an imperious soul, that can foresee the danger in store, without being able to force the means to avoid it upon men that are blind. The true ring of a lofty and domineering nature gives it a durable power.

Other orators come to the fore as Chatham declines. It is then that Burke appears; but his work belongs to the following period.

To be consulted: *Cambridge History of English Literature,* vol. x. chap. xvii.; Fitzgerald, *Life and Times of J. Wilkes,* 1888; Lecky, *History of England in the Eighteenth Century,* 3rd edn., 1887; Williams, *Life of W. Pitt, Earl of Chatham,* 1913; T. Wright, *England under the House of Hanover,* etc., *Illustrated from Caricatures and Satires,* 1868.

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[1] Samuel Johnson supplied them to the *Gentleman's Magazine.*

CHAPTER VI

THE THEATRE

1. The Decline of the Theatre, and the Struggle of Tendencies.—The classical age had seen the withering of the dramatic revival of the Restoration, which by its brilliance, and despite its weak points, did not make too discreditable a showing after the magnificent flowering of the theatre in Elizabethan times. Henceforth, this form of literature seems to lose its vitality. Its history during the course of the last threescore years or so of the eighteenth century is one of a long decadence, interrupted by some occasional break when the talent of an isolated author shines for a brief moment. So definite is the decline in this branch of literature, that its effects increase with time, and towards the end of the century it reaches the lowest point in its downward trend.

A first explanation offers itself, in that at a time when the literary public is increasing in numbers, the taste for the theatre is spreading less. The most austere section of the middle classes, the conduct of which is regulated by Puritan, and next by Methodist views, still foster an aversion on principle for the play.

This hostility could not be decisive, however, as certain facts limit its effectiveness. The eighteenth century is an epoch of great actors. The playhouse managers are not doing bad business. The reason is that the aristocracy has never withheld its patronage from this form of amusement, above all, it is true, from its more frivolous aspects; so that the theatre remains one of the centres of fashionable and intellectual life; and the upper middle class, which shares with the nobility in social influence, accepts generally, on this point as on others, the traditional preferences of a class whose culture is of longer standing.

It is therefore not for want of spectators that there are fewer masterpieces in the drama of this age. The dearth of genius is first of all a fact, for which, perhaps, one must not seek any explanation other than its normality itself, if it is true that the phases of supreme flowering are exceptional, and that it is useless to judge by the English Renaissance standard what one should expect after it.

One can explain this fact, however, by some precise causes. The new society, of a mixed character, in which middle-class traits are coming more and more into evidence, is not hostile to the theatre; despite the persistent animosity of Collier's followers, it even favours it. But public taste is now acquiring a common flavour; as if the authority of a narrow and refined circle was becoming less strong, the tendency of the average theatregoer to demand easy pleasures—a tendency of long standing certainly, against which the greatest of the Elizabethans had had to contend—finds less counter-weight in the judgment of the élite, or it may be that the élite itself has lost its power. Addison had raised his voice in vain against Italian opera. The years which follow see the rise of the pantomime, which takes up again, while lowering the standard, the still living tradition of the old masques; and the success of the *Beggar's Opera* of Gay sets the fashion for a light kind (the ballad-opera) which is so to speak the popular rudiment of the comic opera.

Serious opera, and ballad-opera, are brilliantly successful throughout the century; and the settings, the scenery and the costumes attain a wealth of effect as yet unequalled. These material means draw the attention of the audience to their profit. At the same time, the spirit of the staging becomes more realistic; without attempting as yet the local colouring of Romanticism, it gives the personages traits that are too clearly defined, and an aspect that is too individual and particular, not to impair the instinctive sympathy of the spectator; for by reducing the indefinite adaptability of types of general humanity, it substitutes figures that are more precise, and to which we may less easily accustom ourselves.

It has also been pointed out that the very merit of the actors has contributed in bringing about this decline. On a better lighted stage, which in 1762 has been cleared of all those privileged people who used to crowd upon it, physical characterisation and gesticulation assume greater importance. A line of eminent actors, of whom Macklin, Garrick, Mrs. Siddons and Kemble are only the most famous, keep up the enthusiasm of the public, but attach it to such or such a part, such or such an interpretation, such or such a piece of stagecraft, or even such or such a player, rather than to the play itself. The sovereign influence of Garrick, which was in other respects fecund, and did much to spread the cult of Shakespeare, was not without attracting the attention of a public, already given over to superficial enjoyments, in the direction of the outward means of expression.

These diverse reasons can throw some light upon the decadence of the theatre. It is also certain that the imaginative, emotional needs which it used not long ago to satisfy are now catered for more directly and in a way that is more suitable to all tastes. The novel draws its vitality from a fund of realism, pathos and humour which is the very stuff of comedy and drama; it also creates a fictive image of life, and allows it to impose upon minds the rich sense with which it is charged. De Foe and Richardson do not stir up any uneasiness in the Puritan conscience; the novel escapes the reproaches which the stage had incurred, and which the atmosphere of a playhouse, if not the play produced, still justifies to a greater or lesser degree. It lends itself better to prolonged and serious meditations; it has an incomparable grasp of reality and the problems of life. The modern novel, once fully developed, inherited during the eighteenth century the larger and nobler part of what was the former function of the theatre.

It cannot be said, however, that all the social influences converge towards a drying-up of the source of dramatic inspiration; there are some which tend to vivify by renewing it. When the conscience of the middle class sanctioned a return to the theatre, it brought with it original tastes; and more broadly speaking, the psychological movement which from then onwards accompanied the advent to power of this class in the national life, was strongly impregnated with the forces of a new literature. Sentimental comedy was already in being. The plays of Steele could easily have seemed to open the way for a whole new order of effects.

It is a fact that the middle-class spirit did not show itself a potent inspiration so far as the theatre was concerned. The form in which it vested itself there did not find any great master to handle it. The reason is not that it suffers in itself from any æsthetic inferiority. But in becoming detached from the prestige of social rank, as from that of the past and of distance in space, the drama of modern times limits itself to the resources of realism. In order to exist completely, it has therefore to exhaust reality, and draw from life all that life can give to art. Moral, social and philosophical problems must be brought, without the slightest reserve, into its ken. This unlimited widening of the horizon supposes a boldness, a liberty on the part of the writer, a previous culture on the part of the audience, which England did not possess before the end of the nineteenth century. Then only could drama utilise the life and thought of the time to fullest advantage.

Sentimental comedy and middle-class drama represent in Johnson's day a mere promise of what lies ahead, a form that is uncertain, unconscious of its future development. However timid and mediocre this form may appear to be on the average, it introduces a principle of renovation into the dramatic literature of the time. Its characteristics link it up by intimate affinities with the renascence of the national spirit. It remains distinct, no doubt, from Elizabethan tradition and the Shakespearean type of play, which enjoy throughout the course of this age a very marked renewal of favour; but it is in secret harmony with them, and its own influence tells along the same lines. This convergence has left definite traces; it is not by chance that the drama of Lillo and Moore often transposes the situations and themes of Shakespeare into a plane of contemporary realism.

The English theatre from 1730 to 1790 shows us the struggle of the new forms, in which sentiment is the animating force of inspiration, against the authority of regular comedy and tragedy, such as the Restoration had handed down to classicism. The most brilliant talents are on the classical side; on two occasions, the successes of George Colman, then of Goldsmith and Sheridan, seem definitively to eclipse all rival attempts, and by re-installing the spirit of comedy in favour, to discredit the confused efforts in which are expressed the needs of a turbid sensibility. But the moral transformation is stronger than the tested simplicity of the literary dogma, or than the talent of gifted individuals. The inner movement of minds irresistibly favours the realistic drama, or the mixed and semi-pathetic type of comedy; the instincts of the majority remain in the ascendant, and the theatre drifts back to the new forms, and also to mediocrity. These are in complete control by the end of the century.

2. **Middle-Class Drama; Lillo, Moore.**—The first group of works which calls for attention between 1730 and 1760 is the domestic drama of Lillo and Moore, which represents the counterpart of sentimental comedy in the plane of tragedy.

Lillo[1] is the first who authentically voices the bourgeois spirit in the theatre. By his extraction, his life and his outlook, he belongs to the trading class which is now beginning to be proud of its place in the State. A member of a dissenting sect, he has in him all the fund of Puritan instincts. His moral figure offers a marked resemblance to that of Richardson. But Richardson, of a more robust talent, is also more rigorous in the subjection of art to principles. Lillo's ambition was to be a man of letters; his plays, while constantly claiming to edify us, often make sacrifices to the profane tastes of the public that one cannot credit as being involuntary.

He has at least, one day, the courage to exploit to the full, in the realm of drama, the new order of which his social group tends to be the centre. While the middle class accepts the traditional culture imposed upon it by the aristocracy, it cherishes another ideal at heart. The urgent need for moralising and sentimentalising is one feature of it, but its character is also modern, in this sense that it is realistic, above all alive to the practical aspects of life, and thus to the contemporary aspects; at the same time it does not stand for equality but for democracy, in so far as the middle class demands an extension of privileges. The natural effect of these spontaneous preferences would have been the substitution, for the older canons, of certain values of sentiment, borrowed from the actual everyday life of those whom the artist sees in action about him. And numerous signs allow one to perceive that this revolutionary transformation of art is preparing, that it exists obscurely in middle-class society. But the latter, as a whole, is too docile to shake off the established prestige, and the authority of classical traditions. Through snobbery, as through sincere respect, it accepts a culture that is already at hand. The reversing of values is belated, as compared with the social movement. De Foe remained an exception. In order to see all the effects of the spirit of modern and democratic realism, one has to wait the advent of Crabbe, Wordsworth and Dickens.

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[1] George Lillo, born in 1693 in London, the son of a city jeweller, of Dutch origin, pursued the calling of his father, wrote for the stage a comic opera, *Silvia* (1730); a drama, *The London Merchant, or The History of George Barnwell*, 1731; a tragedy, *The Christian Hero*, 1735; two new dramas, *Fatal Curiosity*, 1736, *Marina*, 1738, and left other works at his death in 1739. *Works*, 1775. *London Merchant*, etc., ed. by Ward, 1906. See study by Hoffman, 1888 (Marburg).

Lillo is another notable exception; and in some measure he has a following. The domestic drama he inaugurates is one of the principal expressions of the moral and social tendencies which contain the future in germ. In this lies the very great interest of his initiative. His boldness made a deep impression. People recalled the fact that it had precedents; Elizabethan tragedy brought the lowest grade of humanity on to the stage; and since then, Otway, Lee and Rowe had taken liberties with the custom of restricting the occasions for pathos to the doings of kings and princes. But indirect precautions brought back their works more or less to orthodox standards; and the passing of a whole century had concealed the familiar simplicity of the Elizabethan theatre. Now for the first time, theatregoers are invited to experience terror and pity at the sight of misfortunes of an exclusively bourgeois nature. *George Barnwell* is the story of an apprentice who is led by a courtesan to commit murder, and who expiates his crime.

Thus breaks up the illusion which indissolubly associated the greatness of dramatic emotion with the majesty of ranks removed from ordinary life. A true courage was required to brave so universal a prejudice.[1] This strength of purpose had in it a creative power, and Lillo's innovation has exercised an influence and left a trace both in England and on the Continent. But in every other respect his play is weak. Taking as his theme the subject of an old ballad, he wove out of it a drama of a very primitive outlook; where there is none of that true simplicity which often carries to a degree of grandeur the inventions of the sons of the people, but rather that conventional and over-simplified view of things in which an inborn vulgarity of taste is revealed. The action has the improbable atmosphere of a morality play; the edifying purpose of the author is everywhere prominent; the psychology deals in mere moral diagrams; the sentiment is declamatory; a regrettable desire for elegance makes the language, at times, lose all sound frankness of expression. As in *Pamela*, the delicate situations are painfully emphasised. All this, however, is not shorn of an elementary kind of appeal to the feelings, rather analogous at bottom to that of Richardson, but robbed of any wealth of shades by the inevitable exaggeration of stage effects.

The dramatic work of Lillo is otherwise negligible. He had not the strength of will to apply his formula with any persistence; his career is one of singular lapses, irregular in its course, and betraying a very hesitant mind.

But in the history of literature he retains a place of primal importance. Not only did he break the spell which prevented the birth of domestic drama, but at the same stroke he destroyed the exclusive prestige of rhymed tragedy. *George Barnwell* is written in prose, if the other plays of Lillo return to the poetic form; and this prose, which is still in the bondage of stylistic habits foreign to spoken language, heralds the full liberty which it will one day acquire.

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[1] Lillo in this play flourishes his standard quite openly. The dedication affirms that a domestic tragedy is more useful for morality than any other, since its field of application is wider. The piece contains an enthusiastic apology of commerce; a type of worthy merchant, generous, magnanimous, etc.

The influence of Lillo in France, where he directed towards middle-class drama the development already begun in lachrymose comedy, and where he found an enthusiastic imitator in Diderot; in Germany, where he was an active force both through his own works, and through the theories of Diderot, is one of the most perceptible traces of that communication of themes, which from then onwards assumes so great an importance in the inter-relations of European literatures, and which reveals the growing convergence of their developments.

In England, one must come to Moore[1] in order to find a worthy disciple of Lillo. He is even superior to his master, although he does not possess the other's initiative.

In its main features, the art of *The Gamester* differs in no way from that of *George Barnwell*. We have here the same moralising story of a humble or at least an average lot; of the ruin caused by passion in the familiar setting of life; the same search after the emotional in the consequences of the fall of a soul; the same complacent sentimentalising. But the play is animated by the energy of a vigorous temperament; this temperament, while rough and awkward, is nevertheless endowed with some dramatic intuition; it is capable of a simplified psychology, without any originality, but acceptable to our inner sense. Despite the improbabilities of the plot, the conventional devices, the false mechanism of characters who are too well aware of themselves, manifest themselves too clearly, and influence one another too easily, the action has force and logic; a sombre poetry emanates from certain tragic situations. Reminiscences of Shakespeare—and they are numerous—do not appear too much out of place in this atmosphere. One can understand the admiration of Diderot for this play, and how he found therein the full realisation of his own dramatic ideal.

3. Fielding, Foote, Colman, etc.—In contrast with middle-class drama and sentimental comedy,[2] the traditional theatre offers us numerous works, of a very diverse and very unequal quality, among which one must not look for too precise a kinship. This large and scattered group could, however, be termed "classical"; the plays which compose it are almost immune from sentimentalism; their inspiration is derived rather from the intellectual sources of literature; they respect the forms which time has consecrated, and obey precepts of ancient standing, even while they show some hankering for independence. One can distinguish among them the regular tragedies, the comic comedies, and the parodies, where the intention of the writer harmonizes easily with the spirit of an age of satire.

This group as a whole is, generally speaking, opposed in its tendencies to that which precedes it; but the opposition is rather in the nature of a secret hostility than a declared war. The revolt against the excesses of sentiment in the theatre cannot be said as yet to have truly revealed itself. Certain individual affinities or sympathies even link up such or such of the representatives of classicism with writers of the other type. Fielding, who will become the avowed adversary of Richardson—until the day when the contagion of sentiment will also affect him—is a useful aid to Lillo in his early career and writes a prologue for one of his dramas. His generous humanity approves of the broader social inspiration animating this new literary kind.

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[1] Edward Moore, born in 1712, a cloth merchant, wrote verse, and produced two comedies, *The Foundling* (1748), *Gil Blas* (1751), and a drama, *The Gamester* (1753); edited a periodical, *The World*, and died in 1757. See Beyer, *Edward Moore*, 1889 (Leipzig).

[2] The latter, without disappearing, suffered a relative eclipse from 1730 to 1750, just when its cause seemed to have been won. The only remarkable work of this period, in this style of play, would appear to be the *Foundling* of Moore.

Regular tragedy is not productive of any masterpieces. The *Cato* of Addison remains an isolated success, not to be equalled by either the *Busiris* of Young (1719) or the *Mariamne* of Fenton (1723). In the course of the years which follow, the influence of Voltaire stimulates the vitality of classical drama, the more efficiently as he himself while in England has modified and enlarged his own ideal. His chief works are translated and imitated.[1] The name of Aaron Hill[2] is connected with these adaptations, among which *Zara* proved a popular success. Later, a version of *Horace* (*The Roman Father*, 1750) by William Whitehead, still makes a lasting impression.

The heroic tragedies of the Restoration, meanwhile, are yet enjoying popular favour. All the romanticism and convention implied in their extravagance is shown up in the colder light of a more reasonable age; and middle-class influences, the obscure need for a return to nature and to simple truth, count for something in the reaction of irony which is shaping itself out against Lee and Dryden. It is in this light that the parodies of Fielding and Carey acquire their true meaning. Profoundly classical in their deeper inspiration, they only touch the correct dramas of the school of Addison in passing, and take effect merely on their surface weaknesses.

The *Chrononhotonthologos* of Henry Carey (1734) is a truculent attack, and one that exhausts in a few scenes the comic vein of a facile satire. There is more humour and a richer inventiveness in the *Tom Thumb* of Fielding (1730); but the developed form of the same farce, the *Tragedy of Tragedies* (1731), with its precise allusions and the erudite and conscientious commentary that accompanies it, falls somewhat into the fault of a laboured caricature.[3] The law of this kind of writing is that boredom should not arise from a too stressed criticism of boredom. . . . Fielding is happier in a spontaneous phantasy such as the *Covent Garden Tragedy* (1733), and in the free expressions of his joyous verve, where literary parody commingles with a juvenile mockery of society, as in *The Author's Farce* (1730), or *Pasquin* and *The Historical Register* (1736).

Such, indeed, are also the tone and merit of his comedies,[4] which are very diverse in form, and range from farce to character studies. They are the light, rapid work of a genius who has not yet lived long enough to be himself, but one can feel in them the touch of a master; and one would perhaps be inclined to praise them more, if they did not rather often overstep the standard of propriety, and if the power of the novelist did not by comparison injure their fragile mirth. They bear hardly any resemblance to Congreve, with whom they are often connected; but by their movement, vivacity, easy turn, naturalness, and the shafts of satire they dart forth with playful and felicitous grace, they are not without reminding us of Molière in his early years. They have not the latter's strong hold upon characters, or his passion for moral truth; their relative penetration is rather owing to the careless pertness, to the frank sincerity, of a mind that scoffs without respect at all the values of which it will not accept the claims.

This sincerity has something generous about it. Fielding's attack upon the oppression of the weak by the strong, the rigour of the law, the unworthiness of some magistrates, is already shaping itself. It is thus no wonder that Walpole's administration should have taken offence at a liberty that was becoming dangerous; the political allusions of *Pasquin* and *The Historical Register* counted for much in the Licensing Act of 1737, which reduced the authorised theatres to the number of two, and created a preventive censure. Fielding now abandoned the stage. He had created a type of play that was lighter, more supple than the traditional piece in five acts, and had accentuated the movement which was carrying comedy to the study of contemporary manners.

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[1] In addition to the plays adapted by Hill, *Brutus, Mahomet, L'Orphelin de la Chine, L'Ecossaise, L'Indiscret, Oreste, Tancrède, Les Scythes, Sémiramis*, were imitated on the English stage. Other native dramas show the influence of Voltaire. See Lounsbury, *Shakespeare and Voltaire*, 1902.

[2] Aaron Hill, 1685–1750, poet and dramatist, was an interesting figure in the literary and social life of this age. *Zara*, 1736; *Alzira*, 1736; *Merope*, 1739. *Works*, 4 vols., 1763. See D. Brewster, *A. Hill*, etc., 1913.

[3] See edition by J. T. Hillhouse, 1918.

[4] The principal are: *Love in Several Masques*, 1728; *The Temple Beau*, 1730; *Rape upon Rape, or The Justice Caught in His Own Trap*, 1730; *Don Quixote in England*, 1734; and two adaptations from Molière: *The Mock Doctor*, 1732; *The Miser*, 1733.

His influence is very apparent in Samuel Foote,[1] whose short and lively plays are a gallery of satirical pictures. Comedy with him is hardly to be distinguished any longer from farce; but it possesses a stage quality, a life, a movement, which have lost nothing of their value with the passing of time. Despite its superficiality and injustice, despite the personal allusions which to-day are obscure, the grossness of tone, and the sentimental episodes with which Foote thought it fit to burden occasionally his ironical and cynical work, in order to keep in touch with the fashion of the day, the whole remains amusing, and of a rich interest for the historian of manners.[2]

Of an equally versatile and less personal talent, Murphy,[3] however, gives evidence of the ingenious skill that, in this age of decadence, was possessed by the very writers in whose hands comedy was degenerating. He creates nothing, and cannot be said to renew profoundly any of the subjects he borrows; but he has a gift of form, a verve, a cleverness, able to sustain in a pleasing way the interest of three or four acts. His farces, wholly surface work, succeeded in being gay; among his more ambitious efforts, which tend towards the moralising, if not lachrymose theatre, one play, *The Way to Keep Him*, adapts a French theme to English manners with felicity and brilliance.

Between Fielding and Goldsmith, it is George Colman[4] who dominates regular comedy. With him, there is at first a marked hostility both in temperament and in principle towards sentimental writing. He begins with a satire of the artificial exaltation which has been encouraged by novels of the Richardson type (*Polly Honeycombe*); while the *Tom Jones* of Fielding, with the admixture of other elements, becomes in his hands a lively, amusing study of the struggle between a prosaic and weak husband, and a wife driven to madness by jealousy (*The Jealous Wife*). But the taste of the public for something of moving appeal in the theatre is stronger than doctrinal preferences; and Colman's best play (*The Clandestine Marriage*, written in collaboration with Garrick), which probably represents the frankest expression of the comic spirit after Fielding and before Goldsmith, is full, despite the quality of its verve, of the seeking after the pleasure reaped from the tender emotions of the heart.

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[1] 1720–77; an actor and remarkable mimic, he received permission to give at the Haymarket Theatre comic variety performances from which evolved by degrees a third authorised scene. Mention may be made of the following among his numerous farces: *The Englishman in Paris*, 1753; *The Minor*, 1760; *The Mayor of Garratt*, 1764; *The Lame Lover*, 1770; *The Maid of Bath*, 1771, etc. *Works*, 3 vols., 1830. See P. Fitzgerald, *S. Foote*, 1910.

[2] One of the most popular of the pure comedies of this age was *The Suspicious Husband* of John Hoadley, 1747.

[3] Arthur Murphy, 1727–1805, wrote regular tragedies like *Zenobia*, 1768, *The Grecian Daughter*, 1772; farces like *The Upholsterer*, 1758, *The Citizen*, 1763; comedies—in which the imitations and reminiscences of Molière are frequent—such as *The Way to Keep Him*, 1760; *All in the Wrong*, 1761. *Works*, 7 vols., 1786.

[4] George Colman the Elder, 1732–94, dramatist and theatrical director, translated Terence, edited the works of Beaumont and Fletcher, wrote comedies, amongst others *Polly Honeycombe*, 1760; *The Jealous Wife*, 1761; *The Clandestine Marriage*, 1766, and operettas; readapted masques, dramas or comedies of the English and foreign theatres: *Philaster*, 1763; *King Lear*, 1768; *Comus*, 1772; *The English Merchant* (*L'Ecossaise* of Voltaire), 1767, etc. *Works*, 4 vols., 1777.

4. **The Return to Shakespeare; the Theatre of Sentiment.**—Side by side with the vein of orthodox dramatic art, however, is to be found abundant evidence of the change which is taking place in the instincts themselves of the cultured theatregoers. In the course of the struggle waged against tradition, the new forms are favoured by the atmosphere of a time when sentiment is extending its sway in spite of all.

The years from 1730 to 1760 represent the period in which the popularity of Shakespeare effaces that of all his rivals; he now takes his pre-eminent place in the favour of the uneducated and educated alike. His dramas, often mutilated, and disfigured by the freest adaptations, at times owe their greatest success to the least profound of their aspects. But the cult of Shakespeare is a symptom of the evolution in taste; it corresponds with a general, an almost universal need for a truth and an intensity, of which the free creations of the Elizabethans supply the fullest and most direct sensation.[1] Despite the compromises and the transitions from one form to another which contemporary taste establishes, it is obvious that classical tragedy is losing all that Shakespearean drama is gaining.

A great actor, Garrick,[2] stimulated this renewal of enthusiasm. The director of a theatre and himself a dramatist, he adapts, stages and plays in more than half of Shakespeare's works. His versions of masterpieces which to-day command greater respect are not always happy. But he adds to the influence of his selections that of his own art, of which the sincerity, suppleness and naturalness contrast with the cold and stilted style of playing, the emphatic monotonous diction which prevailed before him.

To the same deep need for naturalness and moving truth one must attribute the great success, both in Edinburgh and in London, of a drama, the *Douglas* of Home,[3] where amid the moralising naïvety and conventional declamation are to be found notes of simplicity, strong evocations, and descriptions of Scottish scenery. The defects of the play are to-day very apparent; the contemporaries were above all struck by the refreshing atmosphere which an historical theme, a primitive colouring, a style that seeks unadorned forcefulness and at times finds it, brought into tragedy.

Sentimental comedy, lastly, was maintaining its sway; from 1760 to 1770 it shows the larger output and the more brilliant successes. The fact that Kelly's[4] *False Delicacy* coincided with the first venture of Goldsmith as a dramatist has given this play the importance of a manifesto in defence of sentiment against irony. But it is of a mixed character; it preaches an ideal of simplicity in the manner of Rousseau; and while it cannot resist the seductive appeal of emotion, at the same time it adopts a critical attitude towards any over-refined or exaggerated fondness for it. Of a purer and less alloyed character is the sentimental effusion to be found in Whitehead (*The School for Lovers,* 1762), Mrs. Sheridan (*The Discovery,* 1763), Isaac Bickerstaff (*The Maid of the Mill,* 1765); Mrs. Griffiths (*The School for Rakes,* 1769); and especially in Richard Cumberland,[5] the leader of this school. In his most typical works—*The Brothers, The West Indian, The Fashionable Lover*—the interweaving of a plot rich in unexpected incidents and discoveries of lost heirs with scenes for the most part moving and edifying, and with a comic vein used merely as a relief, wholly episodical and secondary, answers to tastes from which the melodrama will evolve about the early years of the following century. The full consciousness of the inclination which attracts an honest heart to sentiment, the stress laid on simple nature as the source of all virtues, the exaltation of charity, together with a tone of philosophic preaching, the justification of certain victims of social prejudices, go to make these plays the composite expression of all the tendencies which at this moment are amalgamating in the English and European cult of sensibility.

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[1] For the *Essay* of Mrs. Montagu on Shakespeare, see below, chap. vii. sect. 5.

[2] David Garrick, 1717–79, directed Drury Lane Theatre from 1747 to 1776 and acted in most of the plays he produced. In addition to his adaptations of Shakespeare, etc., his dramatic work was copious. *Dramatic Works,* 3 vols., 1798. See Fitzgerald, *Life of G.,* 1899; Hedgcock, *David Garrick et ses amis francais,* 1911; Mrs. Parsons, *Garrick and His Circle,* 1906.

[3] John Home, 1722–1808; *Douglas,* 1756. *Works,* 3 vols., 1822.

[4] Hugh Kelly, 1739–77; *False Delicacy,* 1768; *A Word to the Wise,* 1770; *The School for Wives,* 1773, etc. *Works,* 1778.

[5] Richard Cumberland, 1732–1811; *The Brothers,* 1769; *The West Indian,* 1771; *The Fashionable Lover,* 1772. See his *Memoirs* (2 vols., 1807); and for his works: Mrs. Inchbald, *British Theatre.*

5. The Revival of Comedy; Goldsmith and Sheridan.—In the literary fabric of this age, however, were combined the opposing strands of serious sentiment and rational scepticism; there was a whole order of temperaments which lachrymose comedy could not satisfy. Moreover, it awoke the sense of incongruity in minds other than those of a dry and ironical disposition; all who by taste preferred the clearly defined forms of art must impatiently endure the reign of a hybrid, paradoxical type of play. Lastly, the power of pure comedy, the joyous gift of laughter for its own sake, were granted to some talented writers less hopelessly fond of unreasonable tears; and some playwrights were found who could restore a short-lived splendour to comedy through the virtue of their inventive skill and verve.

No one knew better than Goldsmith the charm that lay in emotions sympathetically shared in and felt; but his arch, supple nature was too astute not to perceive the weakness of an avowed and too easy bid for the pleasure of shedding gentle tears. If comedy thus was to trespass upon tragedy, where would humour have the right to express itself? On two occasions, and with unequal success, he tried to revive sincere laughter on the stage.

The Good-Natured Man is a still timid attempt. Goldsmith[1] here pokes fun at the excess of a wholly instinctive and unreasonable charity, deprived of the moral strength without which no real goodness can exist. It was thus an attack against sentimentalism in its very essence, and indeed round this central theme we have the unfolding of episodes that really breathe a contagious gaiety. But the hero, instead of being ridiculous, makes an irresistible claim upon our affection; and from the play there emanates a pleasing sweetness of soul which in many respects brings it closer to the lachrymose type of play. *She Stoops to Conquer* is further removed from it. A piquant observation, elements of ingenious and new realism, a welling forth of pleasantry that never dries up, and bathes even the rare moments when emotion could rise—all go to make this charming comedy an unalloyed source of amusement. But it endears itself too much to endanger at all efficiently a fashion that sought to please by playing upon the sensitive chords of human nature.

Of still greater brilliance, the efforts of Sheridan[2] had no more lasting results. With him, however, comedy regains, in addition to the shining beauty of form, almost all the ease of movement it had with a Congreve. Here the joy of a feast of the mind, in which satire speaks to the intelligence more than to the moral sense, suffices unto itself. It is fed by sallies of the most fertile verve; and a gift of style equal to that of the best classical writers secures for every line a finished quality of art.

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[1] See above, Book III. chap. iii. sect. 3. He has given the reasons for his attitude in *A Comparison between Laughing and Sentimental Comedy* (*Westminster Magazine*, 1773).

[2] Richard Brinsley Sheridan, born in Dublin in 1751, came of a family which had already produced many literary talents, crossed to England and studied at Harrow; married at Bath, in romantic circumstances, the daughter of the composer, Linley, and supplied the stage with farces, a comic opera, *The Duenna*, 1775, an adaptation of Vanbrugh (*A Trip to Scarborough*, 1777), three comedies: *The Rivals*, 1775; *The School for Scandal*, 1777; *The Critic*, 1779, which were very successful. Director of Drury Lane Theatre in succession to Garrick, he entered Parliament in 1780, became Secretary of State, and one of the most noteworthy figures in the political world. He indicted Warren Hastings (1787–94), and with Fox defended the principle of the French Revolution. He died in 1816. *Works*, ed. by Stainforth, 1874; *Theatre*, ed. by Knight, 1906; ed. by Nettleton, 1906; *The Rivals*, ed. by Balston, 1913; *School for Scandal*, ed. by Aitken, 1897; *Critic*, ed. by

This liberty with regard to any moralising aim on the part of the author is further completed by a critical independence towards sentiment. While in Bath and London, Sheridan had frequented the circles of fashion, where the cult of wit and irony was sharpened into a disparaging hostility to the puritanism of the middle class. In such surroundings he had breathed a remnant of the belated atmosphere of the Restoration. No doubt, the desire for sincere simplicity which forms the deeper strain of his nature revolts against the artificiality of such aims; he writes his most amusing comedy against the poisoned slander of the drawing-rooms; but he is too much the master of epigram to make it really hateful to us; his thesis has scarcely any power of conviction, and is only a pretext for sparkling dialogues. His own ideal is that of a lively and spontaneous light-heartedness, the care-free temper of which conceals the best instincts. In the sentimental attitude then in vogue, he thus denounces the suspicious excess, the association with a hollow moralism, the hypocrisy which it implies; his Joseph Surface is a Tartuffe of tender compassion and fine maxims. In the same way, he is irritated by the pretensions of heroic tragedy to a highflown eloquence and sublimity, and he adds one of the most amusing parodies to the list which *The Rehearsal* had opened. But when in his turn he comes to compose a tragedy, it is not less declamatory than the others. . . . His work, without being in any way didactic, nevertheless recommends and suggests a sort of natural morality, an optimistic confidence in the goodness of man's heart, a philosophy in the manner of Diderot, which is not free from the diffuse sentimentalism of the period.

There is thus no deep unity in the tendencies of his theatre; and unity is not either the forte of his plays. They combine with skill diverse elements, plots and themes; they are amalgams of successful, sometimes admirable scenes, rather than organic masterpieces. Sheridan is not a psychologist, but a shrewd and penetrating observer; he is more able to perceive the secret movements of vanity or envy, than to construct characters. He knows how to create the ridiculous from the mechanisms which are built in us by the prejudices of the mind and the distortions of judgment; but the province of comedy in which he most readily moves is that of situations and verbal virtuosity. Here at least he moves with astonishing mastery.

The Rivals is a youthful, gay comedy of no great substance, but one in which the joyous fancy of the author creates an atmosphere of almost poetical unreality; over a background of imitation—memories of the Restoration, and of Molière—there stand out figures that are new, or appear to be so. Without daring to disappoint the public completely in its sentimental expectation, the play outlines in the name of sound reason a reaction of temperament and taste against the whole range of Pre-Romantic preferences. *The School for Scandal* combines several plots, through the saving virtue of an irresistible gaiety and talent; and Sheridan in it has given the English theatre some of its wittiest scenes. *The Critic,* less equal in quality, again gives its full freedom to a rather cruel, satirical verve, which had been somewhat repressed in the preceding play by the moral purpose of the author; in addition to the burlesque, derisive fun poked at the bombastic type of writing—a satire imitated from Buckingham and Fielding—the comedy offers us a broad

Aitken, 1897. See Mrs. Oliphant, *Sheridan* (English Men of Letters), 1883; Sanders, *Life of Sheridan,* 1890; Rae, *Sheridan,* 1896; Sichel, *Sheridan,* 1909; Barbeau, *Une Ville d'Eaux au xviii^{e} Siècle,* etc., 1904.

lively study of the social forms which the secret strife of exasperated pride takes with authors and critics alike. Here again, many passages recall Molière, and are not unworthy of him.

Sheridan's achievement in comedy, however great its success, did not destroy the vitality of the sentimental play; the contagion of a seductive vogue was stronger than the example of an individual and transitory triumph. In the mediocrity into which dramatic production falls back after this writer, the last efforts of classical tragedy, now dying, are paralleled by comedies in which laughter is only the seasoning element of an emotional delectation. The plays of Hannah More (*Percy,* a philosophic tragedy, 1771), Miss Lee (*The Chapter of Accidents,* 1780), Burgoyne (*The Heiress,* 1786), Mrs. Cowley (*The Runaway,* 1776), whether or not they make an effort to break away and follow the path opened up by Sheridan, do not free themselves from the thraldom of sentiment, and link up lachrymose drama with the revolutionary theatre of Holcroft and Mrs. Inchbald. An optimistic and soft conception of human nature henceforth prevents the general public from tasting any pleasure in a coldly ironical picture of life.

To be consulted: A. B. Baker, *History of the London Stage,* etc., 1904; Bernbaum, *The Drama of Sensibility,* 1915; *Cambridge History of English Literature,* vol. x. chaps. iv. ix.; vol. xi. chap. xii.; Gaiffe, *Le Drame en France au xviii*^{e} *siècle,* 1910; Genest, *Some Account of the English Stage,* etc., 1832; Gosse, *History of Eighteenth Century Literature,* 1889; Kilbourne, *Alterations and Adaptations of Shakespeare,* 1906; Lanson, *Nivelle de la Chaussée et la Comédie larmoyante,* 1887; Sir S. Lee, *Shakespeare and the Modern Stage,* 1907; Br. Matthews, *The Development of the Drama,* 1904; Millar, *The Mid-Eighteenth Century,* 1902; Mrs. Parsons, *Garrick and His Circle,* 1906; Sharp, *Short History of the English Stage,* 1909; Seccombe, *The Age of Johnson,* 1899; Sichel, *Life of Sheridan,* 1909; Tupper, *Representative English Dramas from Dryden to Sheridan,* 1915.

CHAPTER VII

RATIONALISM

1. Persistence of the Rational Current.—Among the mixed tendencies of this epoch of transition, there persists a strong current of rational thought, either pure, or diffused in a general attitude of mind.

The eighteenth century still thinks itself, and indeed in many respects it still is, the age of Reason. The need of enlightenment, the belief in a progress of civilisation towards the understanding of reality, and through this towards a better order, do not possess in England such a clear consciousness, such an aggressive force as in France; the original quality of the social tone and of manners, the authority of religion, do not permit so open a struggle between the powers of tradition and those of criticism. Middle-class circles react, obscurely and persistently, in the direction of an instinctive, obstinate preference for the rights of morality and sentiment. But over political frontiers is created an international rhythm, in which all nations of advanced culture participate. From one end to the other of Europe, philosophy is in fashion. French influences on English soil stimulate the spirit of enquiry, the intrepidity of the reflective mind. Personal relations are established between the writers of both peoples. The cult of Voltaire and Rousseau among the English has its counterpart in the Anglomania of the French. Innumerable are the facts connected with the full history of this reciprocal action, which becomes in the middle of the century a more active exchange, a closer intercourse than ever before; it cannot be studied here. On the whole, and despite the pronounced divergence presented by the influence of Rousseau, the radiation of French thought in England adds something to the spontaneous power of the current of intellectualism.

Besides the philosophers, this current makes itself felt in the works of the historians, who more or less apply to their study of humanity's past the taste for disinterested truth; in those of the essayists and critics, who are prone to analyse life and ideas; and also in those of the letter-writers and diarists, who paint a picture of their time without much illusion, and adapt a homely morality to the exigencies of society. These last belong, all but a few, to the wealthier classes; they have the culture of the aristocracy; and their attitude clearly reveals what subsists of an elegant and cosmopolitan rationalism in the highest social circles. A whole aspect of the age of Johnson revives in the works of a Chesterfield and a Walpole.

2. Philosophy; Hume.—David Hume,[1] as has often been noted, passed the decisive years of the formative period of his life at La Flèche, where

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[1] David Hume, born in Edinburgh in 1711, of rural gentry stock, studied law, essayed commerce, and resided for several years in France, where he wrote the first two volumes of his *Treatise of Human Nature* (1739), which, however, escaped notice, as well as a third volume (1740). His *Essays, Moral and Political* (1741–48), had more success. After the publication of *Philosophical Essays Concerning Human Understanding* (1748), *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751), *Political Discourses* (1752), appeared *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects* (1753-4; revised and enlarged until 1777). Already attracted to history, he published in fragments his *History of Great Britain* (1754–61), which relieved him of pecuniary worries. On his appointment as Secretary to the English Embassy in Paris, he was very warmly received (1763–65); in 1766 there took place the quarrel with Rousseau, who had accompanied him to England. He settled in Edinburgh,

Descartes had sojourned. In a sense, he is the Descartes of England; his philosophic enterprise is just as daring, and its influence no less revolutionary. But Descartes carried out his research with the direct vigour of a spiritualist for whom the pre-eminence of thought was an implicit fact of experience. Hume, more empiric and objective, decides to look for the explanation of the world and the laws of life, not in the thinking self, but in that more complex reality, human nature. Locke had already emphasized the method of observation, and what will become at a later date psychology. Hume, who is just as positive and realistic in his tendencies, brings to his examination a superior power of acute intelligence and logic. The first form, and the most uncompromising, of his philosophy, is an analysis the rigour of which has never been surpassed.

His originality lies essentially in the fact that he places in the constitution of human nature the centre round which are organized our knowledge of the universe and all the sciences. The doctrine of Kant will merely give this subjectivism the form of a system. He thus questions that inner reality which is the only one that we can immediately comprehend, and only finds in it either more intense phenomena—what he names impressions—or others more feeble, which recall the first, and which he names ideas. This mental world is governed by a sort of universal tendency—association—just as what is known to the scientist as the physical world is governed by attraction. Associated and combined by the imagination in everyday life, our ideas organize themselves in accordance with privileged relationships when we make an effort to know: such are resemblance, identity, space, time, cause and effect, etc. What is the origin of such relationships, and of those, especially, like space, time, and the causal relation, which seem to be independent of the nature of the objects they unite? Hume sees in them only the implicit generalization of a connection which we have always or almost always experienced. We can never actually perceive the cause of a fact; but the sight of a flame a short distance away is accompanied by heat, and we connect the one sensation with the other by a causal link.

Thus the demonstration that aimed at finding a base for science ends in depriving it of that existence outside of ourselves, of that metaphysical reality, without which it was agreed that human thought would lose its indispensable support. Hume inflicts the most bewildering shock upon the minds that are secure in the confident feeling of a divine or natural order; the universe is broken up into an indefinite series of phenomena which our various needs group together according to uncertain formulæ, and where in the fleeting unsubstantiality of everything we find no fixed support, neither permanent bodies, nor an ego that perceives itself as a durable being. All is relative, and even mathematics are constructed only by eliminating the accidents and irregularities of things. To know is therefore to invent; to believe is to register the authority of an idea which is accompanied by an impression of irresistible force.

This absolute scepticism was to be slightly tempered at a later date, and to receive a less inflexible expression. But the philosophical figure of Hume is fixed by it; he remains the most purely intellectual of British thinkers; and no doubt his Scottish origin goes some way to explain this character. He followed his thought to the end with a quiet intrepidity, obeying no other passion than that for truth.

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where he died in 1776; his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* appeared in 1779; his *Autobiography* in 1777. *Treat. Hum. Nat.*, ed. by Selby-Bigge, 1896; *Essays*, ed. by Green and Grose, 1875. See Burton, *Life of Hume*, 1846; G. Lechartier, *David Hume*, 1900; Teisseire, *Les Essais économiques de Hume*, 1902; Huxley, *Hume* (English Men of Letters), 1879; Thomson, *David Hume*, 1912.

In other respects, he is none the less a man of his race and of his time. His ethics, wholly empirical, are based upon sentiment; following upon Hutcheson, he admits the existence of a natural sympathy in all, an instinct of disinterested benevolence; virtue, to him, is what satisfies the interest we take in others; vice is what wounds it. He also is affected by the wave of humanitarian optimism. To practical questions he spontaneously applies the utilitarian rule of action; mental doubt, here, yields to the necessity of living; and just like every other man, the sceptic has to affirm and even to believe.—His religious ideas, of a very bold nature, never adopted the polemical form sought after by the French school of philosophers. His analysis of the miraculous tends to deny its existence; like Lucretius, he derives the need for faith from the emotions and anguish of the human lot; the "religion of nature" does not escape his criticism, and he cannot read in the order of the world the clear revelation of any providential plan; yet he does not deny every possibility of a prudent adhesion to such beliefs; indeed he seems to accept a vague deism. The irony with which he veils his thought in front of the ban placed by society upon the frank discussion of certain problems, is not aggressive, but discreet and as it were indulgent. There is in him a kind of amenity, which softens the hard tone of his intellectualism.

In politics, he is not a believer in the social contract. Necessity, he holds, has brought mankind together, and the struggle of each against all has given rise to a tacit understanding; but this progress has been wholly empirical; and it is the family, the simplest association for mutual aid, which has supplied the model to the State. His economic doctrine reacts against the mercantile system, and outlines a liberal criticism of the arbitrary interventions of the law.

The last word of this courageous and at the same time prudent thinker is a lesson in sceptical reserve, subservient to the imperious claims of life, and rather analogous to the agnosticism and positivism of the moderns, with a touch of that utilitarian wisdom which will be designated at a still later date as pragmatism. Hume therefore is not outside of the deeper tendencies of English thought; he marks the extreme point attained by it in a phase of free rational activity. To-day his psychology is out of date, and so the construction which he raised collapses at its base. But the method implied in his criticism is of an ever fresh fecundity. He has shown the most accurate sense of the course which must be followed by the search after truth. The scientific and philosophic value of his work is inexhaustible.

It has also a literary value. Hume possesses the natural gift of clearness. His most subtle analyses are astonishingly lucid. The three years during which he was in intimate contact with the French tongue have left their mark upon him. His language is sober, terse, classical, and as supple as it is precise; his syntax has freedom and ease. Without sacrificing anything to art, he is a writer.

3. History: Hume, Robertson, etc.—Clarendon and Burnet were not yet historians in the strict sense of the word. After them, the very keen struggles between political parties stimulated the interest taken by the public in the nation's past, but at the same time such strife was not conducive to that serene attitude of mind necessary for the impartial narration of facts. Little by little, however, the appreciation of the value of texts becomes more widespread; the awakening of a curious interest in documents, which will not be without relation to the revival of imagination, is revealed in the publication of the collection of *Fœdera et Conventiones* by Rymer and Sanderson.[1] And under the influence of the reflective quest bearing on the moral problem of man, a precise knowledge of the development of mankind stands out as one of the indispensable elements of a sound philosophy.

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[1] Twenty volumes, 1704–35.

It is therefore a philosopher who for the first time in England writes history in the modern acceptation of the term. Hume while in France had breathed an air that was charged with suggestions favourable to such an undertaking; the taste for erudition on the one hand, the search after general expositions on the other, had produced some noteworthy works in that country; the century of Voltaire promised to be engrossed by a vast intellectual inquiry into the varied nature of the world and the revolutions of mankind; the art of narration and analysis was carried very far; the *History of Charles XII.* had appeared. Hume and Robertson, in a style in which their contemporaries could distinguish a French influence, write historical works the inspiration of which is not far removed from that of Voltaire and Montesquieu.

Hume is aware of the link which in his opinion unites history with philosophy. The past contains the accumulated experience of the generations; an empirical wisdom will find in it the complement of the data which the present is able to offer; and from such source it will draw the most useful lessons with a view to what remains, after all, the true object of science: rules of conduct. Appointed librarian to the Faculty of Advocates in Edinburgh, he has at hand a precious and copious collection of documents; he finds in them the materials for his *History of England.*[1]

Although he prides himself upon the fact that his assertions are always accompanied by proofs, and that he gives us the references of his texts, he does not carry the scientific scruple of exactitude very far. His aim is to rise above events, group them, judge them, and extract what they have to teach. He looks upon the past from the point of view of a curious observer, who is penetrating, rather ironical, and no doubt given to finding positive explanations for human acts. This realism eliminates to too great an extent the moral factors of history; but it emphasises aspects of the course of things which have hitherto been neglected—social causes, beside political causes. The serenity to which Hume aspires, and which he really does possess to a remarkable degree, is not without some coldness; and if he is free from all passion, he is not from every prejudice. He has been reproached with having shown in his account a decided preference, in principle, for the thesis of the King's prerogative. The Whigs accused him of writing as a Tory. He reveals, in fact, like Voltaire, an instinctive weakness for order, and some mistrust towards the champions of public liberty, as of the Puritan religion. But the absolutism of the last sovereigns of the Stuart line is not any more to his liking.

While this work has lost all historical value to-day, it retains the merit of having raised the study of the past to the level of the highest literature. It has, without effort and quite naturally, the qualities of form—arrangement, orderliness, dignity of style, clearness of language. Above all, it displays a breadth of view which gives the narration all its moral and philosophic import. His narrowness in certain respects, on points where the spirit of the time had not yet learned to feel without prejudice, may shock us. Hume speaks of the Middle Ages without the sympathy which imagination permits; he knows them but ill, and makes no attempt to improve his knowledge; all that is primitive or barbarous has scarcely any interest for him; he has no premonition of the rapid advance which is about to be made by the romantic intuition of all early origins. His outlook has the precision, but also the limitations of a rationalism which has not yet reaped sufficient benefit from the repeated experience of the complexity of things. But in the normal and familiar plane of human affairs, he opens up a way for the interpretation of motive forces and the powers at work, in a word for the explanatory kind of history, which others after him will follow still further.

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[1] He treats, first of all, the reigns of James I. and Charles I., then continues his account to the Revolution of 1688; after which he retraces his steps and goes back to the origins of the nation.

Robertson,[1] who like Hume is a Scotsman, achieves a speedier success among his compatriots by writing the history of Scotland. But his fame spreads immediately to England and the Continent. He has very serious merits; by the arrangement of his matter, the form, the clearness of his style, he recalls Hume, and in turn affords evidence of French influence.[2] He too has philosophical aims and ambitions. While his is not the penetrating vigour of Hume, he shows an even superior sense of the correlation of facts. From the first the reader is struck by his prudence and taste for precision; he creates the impression of a very safe mind, fully equipped for the pursuit of truth. He has been charged with not having always shown method in his utilization of documents, and with having let himself be carried away by a rhetorical impulse in his last works. His *Charles V.*, which offers a general survey of the end of the Middle Ages, won many readers, down to the nineteenth century.

History, in its beginnings as a technical branch of writing, still presented an easy means of livelihood to authors who fared poorly in literature. Smollett and Goldsmith, after Hume, became historians in a secondary capacity; they pursued their task with talent, and one cannot deny them the advantage which one grants to Hume, of finding a link between this second activity and their main creative work. The novel of manners was not less directly than moral philosophy a preparation for the understanding of man's past. In his continuation of Hume's *History of England,* Smollett[3] did not equal him. Quickly written, his narrative reveals a certain haste, while he does not bring the same vigour to bear in his interpretation of facts. His work is clear, however, lively, and reads pleasantly. It is because of the realism of his thought, together with his somewhat narrow but penetrating psychology, that Smollett occupies a rather honourable place among writers who had not as yet an exacting sense of the historical method.

The work of Goldsmith[4] is a series of familiar letters, supposed to have been written by a man of noble birth to his young son. The matter is almost entirely borrowed; but Goldsmith knows how to give judicious advice upon the study of history, and in a certain measure has done original work by adapting his narrative to the imagination of youth. He does not dare to grant full expression to his personality, and the charm of his style suffers somewhat from this constraint.

4. The Essays of Hume and Goldsmith.—The essays of Hume occupy an original place halfway between pure philosophy and the ethics of everyday life. They are more compact than the witticisms or the amusements with a serious intent, after the fashion of the *Spectator,* or even the judicious but somewhat oratorical dissertations of Johnson. Although Hume wanted to tone down the too concentrated doctrine of his first work, his thought has too direct a motion, his style too great a clearness, for the expression ever to develop to any further length than what is strictly indispensable. These shorter writings, which are at times very brief, and always terse, are models of the difficult art, less English than French, of explaining in an easy way an analysis implying manifold and precise shades.

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[1] William Robertson, 1721–93; a Presbyterian minister, then Principal of the University of Edinburgh; *History of Scotland,* etc., 1759; *History of Charles V.*, 1769; *History of America,* 1771. *Works,* 8 vols., 1825.

[2] Notably that of Voltaire (*Essai sur les Mœurs*).

[3] First of all, he compiled a complete history, then developed the modern part in 5 volumes, from 1688 to the accession of George II., and left at his death a sixth volume (1760–65).

[4] *An History of England in a Series of Letters from a Nobleman to His Son,* 1764.

The subjects treated are of a very varied nature. If one passes over those which merely reiterate the ideas of the *Treatise of Human Nature,* the rest deal with political, economic and social, or with moral and religious, or again with æsthetic and literary matters. The personality of Hume is here revealed more liberally than in his chief works. It appears to be singularly intuitive and supple, beneath the cold and polished surface of a rational scepticism. Hume is a thinker of extreme perspicacity, endowed with a very fine sense of truth. This he owes to a keen and fresh perception, to a vigorous grasp of the elusive, obscure realities of collective life or of consciousness. Whether they treat of artistic problems or of constitutional relations in the State, it is the psychologist who supplies the main force and value of these essays. It is not a question here of systematic psychology, such as Hume conceives, and such as has long since been outgrown; but of a much more efficient effort to get at the secret connections of objects in the inner world, whether these objects belong to it, or whether it only reflects and unifies them. And this wealth of moral knowledge, which goes even to the point of divination, is made accessible to all by the clearness, the self-possession of a serene intelligence, which one might perhaps reproach with an utter lack of feeling, if it did not wrap itself up in a kind of very sincere benignity. Hume is the most complete type of "intellectual" that the eighteenth century in England has to offer us; but at the same time he is none the less human.

Goldsmith has more inspiring warmth, even if in his case the intellectuality is not of so exacting a nature. Still one should not undervalue his satirical remarks, or his reflections upon the society of his time. In very close touch as he is with French literature and thought, he is a "philosopher" after his fashion. With greater blandness and with his indulgent humour, he criticises English manners and ideas, just as Voltaire and Rousseau did in France.[1] Occasionally he imitates Voltaire; he denounces the accusatory wrath of Rousseau, but yet is influenced by him. The ideal of simplicity in accordance with nature—a principle of good—which he suggests or which can be divined in the background of his work, is that of his temperament; in his applications of it, however, he owes something to the theses of Rousseau. The horizon of his mind is international; he likes to illustrate the diversity of opinions and fashions. In other respects, he is first and foremost himself. The moralist in him can temper a clever mockery with pleasing archness. The theorist of taste and letters shows at once a very exact sense of values, when distinguishing the artificial character of classicism in its decline; and a certain timidity, with regard to Shakespeare and the beauties of "Gothic" times. Goldsmith is essentially a man of his day; the literary transition, the change in the mood of minds, are taking place in him without his being fully aware of them.

The best feature of these small treatises is to be found in the personality which permeates them, and which is to be more clearly seen at times in the memories borrowed by Goldsmith from the years of his own past. As an essayist, he has much of the charm of Steele, with less youthfulness of heart, a riper reflection, and a touch of melancholy. In thus taking up once again the form created by the authors of the *Spectator,* he imparts to it a vitality that is new, and yet in many respects not unlike what it was before.

5. The Ethics of Everyday Life; the Letter-Writers.—The closer social relations which develop during the course of the eighteenth century among the governing classes—the aristocracy and the upper middle order—create a more active interchange of ideas, and a more frequent human intercourse. In England as in France, it is the age of the "salon." This is not to say that the differences between the two peoples do not come out in certain traits.

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[1] For Goldsmith's debt to France, see the study by L. Sells, 1924.

The joy of conversation, in the case of the English, is less frank and free, less sought after for its own sake. Most often it is fused with another interest—worldly, political, or moral and religious. Though brilliant personalities, who combine feminine charm with vivacity of intellect, also form in England the centre of these voluntary associations, the latter have not played the same part, or exercised the same attraction as in France, whether because owing to the rival influence of other and less refined pleasures, such as gambling, the surroundings proved less favourable to them; or because the difficult reconciliation of good taste and the fullest spontaneity with the cult of intellectual things, was on the average less perfectly effected.

Social intercourse in the English upper classes, however, is at this date similar to what it is in France. The life of distinguished groups has a polite and independent moral tone. The diffuse rationalism which colours manners and thought is there prone to assume the aspect of light irony, of scepticism, and even cynicism. Far from the currents of Puritan austerity or sentiment which are slowly extending their influence from the mass of the middle class to the whole body of society, the circles that are privileged by birth or fortune thus retain to the end of the century a mode of living in which one recognises the tradition of the Restoration, in an attenuated and more decorous form.[1]

This aspect of an age when classicism is becoming a spent power, whilst the moral forces which will replace it are steadily growing, is shown up particularly in the works of authors who take part in the life of the world, and who write for it, or whose only object is to recreate its atmosphere in their pages. Their inspiration shows, just as well as the isolated thought of a Hume, that the surviving reign of classicism in literature is founded upon the parallel continuance and authority of a frame of mind in intimate harmony with it.

The most famous series of letters of this period have a common character; they express in the field of familiar moralising, or of worldly intercourse, the spirit of a society eager for truth, greedy for pleasure, cosmopolitan in taste, secretly distrustful or hostile with regard to any enthusiasm or any rigorous discipline.

A thoroughly French figure in many respects, related to France by affinities and preferences, writing French as easily as English, Chesterfield[2] is well known in France; and the attitude of this educator towards the problems of conduct is too clearly defined not to have been everywhere and at once understood. He eliminates everything that is purely a matter of conscientious scruples; and only appeals to sentiment in the least possible measure. Social success is the aim proposed in life; in order to attain it, the most fitting means are recommended with unabashed frankness, and in the light of the reflective experience of a man of the world. Politeness, accomplishments, the art of pleasing, the attractive qualities of personality and mind, have never been more happily defined. There is in these letters a shrewd sense of worldly life, and of the working of selfishness pitted against selfishness under the cloak of good manners. These pages containing a father's advice to his son, have the quality of a moral analysis that is truly classical, clear, without illusion, expressed in a language of perfect ease and naturalness. The cold, elegant cynicism which emanates from them has always repelled the tender and ardently religious soul. But it is easy to exaggerate the unmoral note in Chesterfield. Under the gloss of culture, his temperament preserves a texture that is rather English. The art of living he teaches is that of the century, accepted without revolt, and explained without any attempt at disguise; but the man in Chesterfield has sides to his character that are genuinely amiable, simple, and sincerely affectionate.

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[1] The didactic treatise of John Brown (1715–66), *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times* (1757), according to which English society, for the moralist, had only surface defects, reveals the persistence of an easy, conventional optimism, in direct opposition to the Puritan view which considered England as deeply corrupt.

[2] Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield (1694–1773), studied at Cambridge, travelled on the Continent, skilfully discharged the duties of many public posts, was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1745); became deaf and retired from active life, devoting himself more and more to the education of his illegitimate son, Philip Stanhope. The letters to the latter in English, French, or even in Latin, although not intended for publication, appeared after his death in 1774 (ed. by Strachey, 2 vols., 1901). Another series of letters addressed to his godson was only brought to light in 1890 (*Letters to His Godson*, ed. by the Earl of Carnarvon). See Sainte-Beuve, *Lundis*, vol. ii.; Craig, *Life of Chesterfield*, 1907.

Horace Walpole[1] is an historian of the second order, a distinguished amateur, capable of critical initiative (in his *Historic Doubts*); and by a mere whim a novelist, whose paradoxical work we shall study elsewhere.[2] It is through his letters that his fame remains living to-day. They offer us the most complete, varied and animated picture of English life in the second half of the eighteenth century. Those he addresses to his friend, Sir Horace Mann, in residence at Florence, are a diary of and commentary upon the political and worldly affairs of his country. Without neglecting literature, he speaks more often of the arts, and especially of the court, the town and Parliament. But nothing that takes place in Europe is indifferent to him; his travels take him to France and Italy; and by the breadth of his culture as of his interests, he eminently represents the cosmopolitanism of the higher social circles in this age.

The correspondence of Walpole is full of great talent; it is the work of a man of supple, varied interests, gifted for the fine and lively expression of ideas, and for that type of conversational writing which demands leisure, a rich experience, piquancy of mind, and a spirit of friendship. The pleasant vivacity of the form is sustained and directed by a discreet endeavour and an intentional aim. Walpole admired Madame de Sévigné too much not to wittingly try to imitate her. If he spoke French poorly, he knew French literature well, and while the influence of France upon his style may have been exaggerated, his letters, nevertheless, are polished by that international refinement of thought and language, in which the share of France is recognisable before all others. Less nimble, rapid and brilliant than Voltaire, he comes up close to him through his ease, his happy turn of phrasing, and epigrammatic felicity. With his labour, he has an unfeigned simplicity, which at times even goes to the length of the careless writing of the nobleman; he is never tedious, never pointless, and often displays an original happiness of expression.

[1] Horatio, son of the Prime Minister Sir Robert Walpole, born in 1717, studied at Eton and Cambridge, travelled on the Continent with his friend, the poet Gray, entered Parliament (1741), from which he retired in 1768. Long before this date, he devoted his attention to his residence at Strawberry Hill, building it in Gothic style, gathering in it a collection of works of art, establishing a printing press, etc.; during his frequent travels in France, he formed with Mme. du Deffand a friendship which, with Walpole, did not seem to have been a love-affair. Created Earl of Orford in 1791, he died in 1797, leaving behind an enormous correspondence, which was published in fragments from 1798 onwards (ed. by Paget Toynbee, 16 vols., 1903). See *Supplement to the Letters of Horace Walpole*, ed. by Toynbee, 1919. His miscellaneous works (5 vols., 1798, and afterwards increased to 9 vols.) comprise historical writings (republished since that date) on the reigns of the Hanoverian Sovereigns, and his *Historic Doubts on the Life and Reign of Richard III.*, 1768; a novel, *The Castle of Otranto*, 1764; a tragedy, *The Mysterious Mother*, 1768; *Some Anecdotes of Painting in England*, 1762, etc. His letters to Mme. du Deffand were destroyed, and we have only those which she addressed to him (ed. by P. Toynbee, 3 vols., 1912). See A. Dobson, *Horace Walpole*, 1910; Greenwood, *Horace Walpole's World*, 1913; Yvon, *Horace Walpole*, 1924; idem, *Horace Walpole as a Poet*, 1924.

[2] See below, Book IV. chap. iii.

The subject of greatest interest is the personality of the man, who, despite a certain reserve, reveals his whole self in this correspondence of sixty years. Here one comes upon a philosophy inclining to cynicism, but at bottom courageous, almost stoical; a disillusioned scepticism, which has lost the very power of enthusiasm, though not that of curiosity; along with an observation in general indulgent and amused, some hardness of judgment, a tone of language at times mocking and unfeeling; but on the other hand a sincerity, a modesty as to the most intimate sentiments, a real faculty of affection, an aristocratic scorn for the sufferings of a life that was not altogether light to bear. His conduct towards Madame du Deffand—whom he treated at first with respect, esteem, and a little irony, then with a stronger and warmer attachment, still tempered by the fear of ridicule, and the feeling of the fragility of such a defiance to cold Reason—is not such, as far as one can ascertain, as seriously to injure his memory, even if it is not altogether to his credit.

Mrs. Montagu[1] is one of the queens of the Blue Stockings, as were termed at this date in England those ladies who were bold enough not to hide their wit and culture.[2] The energy and originality implied in such audaciousness would of course suggest to them a sometimes excessive reaction against the absolute effacement which use and opinion imposed upon women; and the term by which they are known reveals in others with regard to them a slightly irreverent feeling. But there is hardly any pedanticism in these wives and mothers of families, who are stricken with the love of literature and knowledge, no more than there is any real preciosity either; the faint traces of affectation are compensated for by a strong sense and by the unexceptionable seriousness of their mode of living. The doubtful reputation of a Mrs. Behn or a Mrs. Manley leaves a Mrs. Vesey, a Mrs. Delany, a Mrs. Boscawen perfectly immune; on the other hand, it is too evident that this English replica of the French "salons" owes to a rather different social and intellectual tone a less spontaneous charm, a less communicative grace.

Mrs. Montagu possesses, however, a very witty verve. Of a balanced, almost cold nature, she strikes rather than she attracts the reader by the quality of her gifts. Her very first letters already show an extraordinary vivacity and pungency; and to the end her writing retains its balance, its terseness, its ease of style. She cultivates her talent, and does not always avoid the error of abusing it; the virtue of a pleasing simplicity is not one of her merits; her correspondence, of unequal interest, now has lost its freshness of appeal. Yet it still contains valuable descriptions of manners, and the picture of an intelligent, brilliant, sensible woman, reasonable enough to temper her caustic exuberance with a wise and prudent art of living.

Despite the relative dryness of her moral temperament, Mrs. Montagu has a keen appreciation of the greatness of Shakespeare, even if she has no liking for his poetry; she defends the rights of his creative genius, and shows up the errors of Voltaire, with an entire freedom of judgment as to the dogmas of classicism. In the same way, Horace Walpole, more out of intellectual curiosity than from any sentimental contagion, takes his place one day among the creators of the Pre-Romantic novel. Indeed from now onwards there are very few writers who do not more or less reveal the commingling of tendencies, and the close association of the new desires with traditional rationalism.

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[1] Elizabeth Robinson, daughter of a Yorkshire squire, born in 1720, after a brilliantly precocious youth married in 1742 Edward Montagu, of noble descent and great wealth, but devoid of talent. She formed the centre of an elegant and cultured society, and kept a salon in London until the last years of the century; she died in 1800. Her *Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespeare* (1769) was a reply to the criticisms of Voltaire. The first part of her correspondence was published in 4 volumes (1809–13); the second was utilised by J. Doran in his book, *A Lady of the Last Century* (1873); and by R. Blunt (*Mrs. Montagu, Her Letters and Friendships from 1762 to 1800*), 1923. See R. Huchon, *Mrs. Montagu and Her Friends*, 1907; E. R. Wheeler, *Famous Blue-Stockings*, 1910.

[2] For the probable origin of this phrase—at first applied to a man, and suggesting the unceremonious carelessness in dress of one whose sole concern was intellectual elegance, see *Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. xi. chap. xv.

To be consulted: *Cambridge History of English Literature,* vol. x., chaps. ix. xi. xii. xiv.; vol. xi. chap. xv.; Cru, *Diderot as a Disciple of English Thought,* 1913; Dobson, *Horace Walpole,* new edition, 1910; T. H. Green, *Introduction* to Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature,* vols. i. and ii. (*Works,* vol. i.), 1885; Gosse, *History of Eighteenth Century Literature,* 1889; Huxley, *Hume* (English Men of Letters), 1879; Leslie Stephen, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century,* 1902; Yvon, *Horace Walpole,* 1925.

BOOK IV

THE PRE-ROMANTIC PERIOD (1770–1798)

CHAPTER I

THE AWAKENING OF IMAGINATION

1. **Psychological Sources, and the Trend of Ideas.**—The last thirty years of the eighteenth century can be considered as being in themselves, and without too artificial an arrangement of the facts, a separate period in the study of English Literature. They are naturally linked with those which have just preceded them; in the course of the long transition which is finally to lead to Romanticism, they form, as it were, a second stage, and thus a continuation of the first. At the same time they possess a quality of their own, because the signs which go to show that a moral and literary change is about to develop, that a new age is soon to announce itself, are ever-increasing and relatively more numerous. If the general trend of thought during these years is somewhat mixed, still one can see that the psychological elements whose growth is moulding the future are henceforth sufficiently powerful to assume a dominant part; they outnumber other elements whose influence lies in the opposite direction. Thus, if a definition be sought to characterize this period, it is best supplied by the age which follows, and towards which it obviously tends; it can be appropriately termed the "Pre-Romantic" period.

It owes its distinctive character, primarily, to the fact that the awakening of imagination reinforces and completes the renascence of feeling. From the one movement one passes naturally and easily to the other. In the normal course of things, the desire to feel will impart a certain stimulus to the faculty which evokes and combines various kinds of images, especially those images of an intense and rare nature. In the latter is to be found one of the most potent sources of emotion. Their suggestive quality is sought after not only for itself, but because it rarely manifests its presence without, at the same time, sending an awakening thrill through all the fibres of our sensibility. The attractive charm of visions borrowed from the storied past, from distant climes, from all that is striking and odd, commingles with the actual satisfaction of feeling found in the familiar and full stirring of pathos; and so the mind glides from the second of these methods to the first by an inevitable and prompt working of the law that governs the renewal of its inner resources. The one cannot be fully exploited, nor indeed put to its best use, unless the other be called upon to intervene.

There is already evidence, during the preceding period, of the imaginative awakening about to take place in the world of letters; it is to be seen to a certain extent in the poetry and, in a lesser degree, in the novel of the time. After 1760, all such symptoms and signs of a change tend to group themselves into an imposing whole. The feeling for the past in all its diverse aspects, the thirst for the picturesque, the longing to probe the mysterious, in one word, the quest after a world of the senses that is removed from daily reality and the more impressive, all bring a larger scope and a greater wealth to the forces at the disposal of art, thus completing the means by which a transformation in literature can be effectively prepared.

Among all these new elements, the one which deserves most attention is, perhaps, the yearning for the past; it was the most widespread feeling besides being the most pliable; it could more or less penetrate and colour the others, giving its special character to any such association. Imagination in its conception of the ideal world seeks what is fundamentally opposed to present realities; it finds its perfect realm in the fond resurrection of what has once existed; grandeur and beauty harmonise with the special charm that clings like an aroma to the quality of what has been. The essential feature of pre-romantic evocation lies in the backward direction of its glance.

Other paths might have been followed; and, in fact, at times we find the imaginative activity of pre-romantic writers working in a present which the element of mystery has tended to enlarge, or which has been clothed in an atmosphere of poetry, being removed into space. But much more often it is the past that is conjured up in the mind, whether it be in itself an all-sufficing source of inspiration, or whether it claim in addition the resources of the mysterious. The reason is that the easiest and surest means of satisfying the growing desire of the soul for a moral change of scene was to awaken the memories of a former civilisation, that lay stored in the slumbering recesses of the mind, or hidden in the dust-covered books of time. It was more simple to recall this past, to infuse it, as it were, with vital interest, than to set about the planning and building of a wholly new civilisation.

But what chiefly matters, is that in the need of the soul for moral alienation from the present, more was included than a mere craving for an artificial change in the pictorial setting of life. There was also a keen desire for spiritual relief, which thus links up the awakening of imagination with an earlier movement, the awakening of sentiment. The past is not only felt as a period apart; it stands in direct conflict with the present, acts as a reactionary force, symbolising the spirit of protest and revenge. It will have nothing whatever to do with the present in the very sense in which contemporary thought most clearly manifests itself. Now, the age is one of dry reasoning, when all the vitality of life seems to be on the ebb; so, the soul will turn towards the past, in order to find the contentment so necessary to the cravings of its emotional nature. And of all the varied periods which such a past has to offer, that which affords the greatest satisfaction will be the first to be explored.

It may thus be said that the renascence of imagination consisted above all in the literary and artistic discovery of the Middle Ages; these came to be revealed because of the interest people began to take in them, and this very interest was the expression of a deeper need of the sensibility. The visible relics of this great epoch, and the traces it had left in the collective memory of mankind, showed it to be an age of faith, of the picturesque, of simplicity and of strong appeal; no more was needed by an inner aspiration capable in itself of creating, still further of transforming, its own object. The relics of the past were examined and explained; the cult of memory became a hallowed art. The Middle Ages lived again as a period of faith, of picturesqueness, of simplicity, of pathos, of all that lacked in a century of rational lucidity, at the heart of which was growing the tedium, and even the disgust, of itself.

The passionate idealisation of the Middle Ages was, as always, the work of a strong desire whose whole aim is vested in the quest for its own fulfilment. In this renascence any real historical intention, any scruple of truth or desire for preciseness, was of little or no account. The past was defined and pictured by mental faculties to which veracity of detail was irrelevant. The one main idea was that the past should differ from the present; and as the present was the very antithesis of the intense, exuberant and romantic civilisation of the English Renaissance, it thus came about that no difference was made between the Renaissance and the Middle Ages. The one epoch merged in the other, was evoked with it, and received the same attention.

If we search deeply enough in the history of these thirty years, we shall find that what really takes place is the reawakening of a former state of the national mind; and it is only because they are recognised as familiar things that bygone centuries, with their manners, their mental and moral rhythms, and their concrete forms, acquire any real value. The sympathy which is extended to things of the past is based upon the belief that once upon a time there actually existed the various modes of sensibility which are now being sought after, and that it is within the limits of reason that they can again assert themselves. It is a phase, one might say, in its own inner evolution, that the national spirit perceives and approves of in the imaginative return to the past. The Middle Ages are hailed as a reality, once alive, and whose revived existence is now to be mysteriously but closely interwoven with the life of the present. It is as if the consciousness of the period were stirred at the same time with the enchanting pleasure of an awakening, and the remorse of its own forgetfulness. The English soul now feels the regenerating vigour of a new vitality pervading it, and dimly realises that this is due in no small measure to the resurrection of its former self.

2. Ossian and Ossianism.—This subjective notion of the awakening of imagination explains the very mixed nature as well as the great inequality of the elements which are the formative forces in the new movement. One central demand, the origin of literary changes then under way, was satisfied by various stimulating influences, whether those of different epochs in the past, or of different provinces in the realm of imagery.

To say that influences such as these had never before been felt would be misleading. They had, at times, been active, but the moral atmosphere that was necessary to do them justice was not sufficiently prepared to co-operate in the development. The seventeenth century was not without some knowledge of the Middle Ages; as early as the opening years of the following century, there was an increasing response to their attraction. Dryden, Pope and Addison were sufficiently acquainted with Chaucer to imitate and even adapt his work—very superficially at times—while the simplicity of the popular ballad won their praise. It is not, however, until after 1750 that the common mind, from the effect of a deep and hidden growth, evinces a new and sympathetic interest, first of all in the intrinsic value of the old-time texts, and then in ancient monuments and the modes of life of long ago. The soul of the nation is now discovering that it is not altogether satisfied with its present state, that there is still something to be desired; and that, on the other hand, such a discovery implies a full consciousness of its modernity as compared with the past. Thus the idea of an inner change was slowly maturing, and such an idea brought with it a certain sense of regret.

One distinct feature can be noted in the early history of this movement, and one that easily precedes any other; namely, the part played by Scandinavian influence. Sir William Temple quotes an old Norwegian poem, adding several remarks by way of commentary; at Oxford the study of Gothic and Icelandic receives some attention; Percy translates five "pieces of Runic poetry" before publishing his *Reliques;* and Gray composes original odes, in which there is evidence of a powerful but tentative effort to seek in Northern mythology the same power of lyric inspiration that was ordinarly sought in that of the

South.[1] But even in the work of these pioneers there is little else than a superficial tapping of the literary vein, the results of which are of secondary importance; the effect of Scandinavian poetry is neutralised by the stronger prestige of Celtic models, and this in a form which had been rendered popular by the success of the Ossianic tales.

While the theme of these tales cannot be considered as in any sense mediæval, it becomes, nevertheless, by virtue of certain immediate affinities, part and parcel of the influence of the Middle Ages. The study of its success throws a very direct and valuable light upon the hidden origin of the revival of imagination, because its history is that of a forgery.

To say that there is a touch of sincerity in the forgery of Macpherson is permissible. As a writer, he has not the modern scruple of literary property; he has an aim in view, and this is in a large measure satisfied by the fragmentary odds and ends of Gaelic legends which he succeeds in collecting. Here, according to him, was to be found the justification of national sentiment, and of the aspiration to a kind of primitive heroism, to an imposing yet simple beauty enshrouded in the nebulous mystery of the North. And if, perchance, he does not find it, he is audacious enough to create it. It seems to him the most legitimate course to adopt in his part of interpreter that he should collaborate with the texts, and even use his inventiveness in repairing the ravages of Time. When reconstructing in all its entirety an incomplete image or, if need be, putting a polish to what an uninstructed taste has left undone, Macpherson is not a mystifier in the ordinary sense of the term. He is carried away by the religion of national beginnings; he obeys the impatience of his enthusiasm, and has also a very keen sense of the need of the hour, and of what makes for success.

Macpherson[2] is essentially a man of his time, stirred as are his contemporaries with a moral disquietude that is in search of some object of worship; and while this accounts for the success of the Ossianic tales, there is also another important element contributing to that success: the part played by the Classics, whose prestige interweaves itself with the illusion which the whole work was to create. The epic of *Fingal,* according to the critic Blair, conforms to the canonic teaching of Aristotle. Scottish pride, forgetting the Irish origin of the legend, proudly manifested its joy that a Celtic Homer should have conferred such glory upon the very distant past of Caledonia. The *Iliad* as understood by the eighteenth-century reader supplied the model for *Fingal*—but only the model, and the little influence it did have upon the work of Macpherson will not explain the tremor of excitement which greeted for many a long day the reading of his cadenced prose, nor the fascination it held over the imagination of Europe. There emanated from the themes collected by Macpherson a veritable force, the effect of which he knew well how to multiply by means of his skilful art, together with the intuitional gift of a deep sense of poetic values.

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[1] Sir W. Temple, *Essays of Heroic Virtue, of Poetry;* G. Hickes, *Linguarum Septentrionalium Thesaurus,* etc., *Oxford,* 1703–5; Th. Percy, *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry Translated from the Icelandic Language,* 1763; for the Scandinavian Odes of Gray, see above, Book III. chap. ii. sect. iv. For a comprehensive study of the subject, see Farley, *Scandinavian Influences on the English Romantic Movement,* 1903; Van Tieghem, *Le Préromantisme,* 1924.

[2] James Macpherson (1736–96), was a Highlander by birth and a school teacher and private tutor by profession. His early poetry showed distinct classical tastes. Encouraged by Home and Blair, he adapted or invented certain *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* after the poems of Old Irish cycles which had found their way into Scotland since the eighth or ninth century either in manuscript form or by oral tradition. These he declared to be "translated from the Gaelic" (1760). The success of the collection led him to explore the Highlands in search of other material, which, in turn, supplied him with *Fingal, an Ancient Epic Poem,* etc., 1761; *Temora,* 1763. These poems in prose had a great and lasting success, both in England and abroad, and gave rise to numerous direct imitations, among which those of John Smith (*Galic Antiquities,* 1780) rank beside the *Ossian* of Macpherson. The authenticity of the group of poems thus named, after their supposed author, was discussed since its appearance, but found many supporters among writers and thinkers of note. Macpherson's so-called sources in Gaelic were printed in 1807. He was also the author of several historical works; translated Homer into prose, etc. *The Works of Ossian,* 4th edition (final text), 1773; ed. W. Sharp, 1896. See Saunders, *Life and Letters of Macpherson,* 1894; Smart, *James Macpherson,* 1905; Van Tieghem, *Ossian en France,* 1917; idem, *Le Préromantisme,* 1924.

It matters little if the figure of Ossian or the pictorial representation of his universe be a creation of the most fictitious fancy, if the tales are a strange blending of legendary lore and simple sentimental conviction. Thrown as they were, from 1760 onwards, into the midst of a seething Romanticism, they brought with them the powerful leaven of a visionary melancholy. The central motive of these poems is the pathetic sense of regret for what once has been; they pass in review the glorious imagery of bygone days; and they touch upon the sadness of modern times. These sentiments are given dramatic form in a number of moving incidents, whose decorative setting is placed in a wild and fascinating land of mists, of torrents and of rocks. To a type of reader who by now was thoroughly bored with all the dry precision of classicism, and who was keenly desirous of experiencing the caressing sense of vague indefiniteness, the Ossianic scene—the landscape of the Ossianic page, brought with it the softness of dark grey tones, a sublimity suggestive of the infinite. Macpherson's art is an important contribution to this quality of style so essentially romantic; he developed, accentuated and introduced a greater tenderness into what was but summarily indicated in the bardic fragments. So that the "Celtic mood" is thus to a great extent the creation of modern sensibility, working on the simple suggestions offered by the ancient characteristics of the race.

Above all, Macpherson knew how to imbue his epic prose with the rhythm of song, to give it a cadenced flow that was at once expressive and stately, and which harmonised with the grandeur and emotion of the theme; to arrange his recitative into paragraphs which take the place of stanzas, and to construct each sentence according to a periodic measure of solemn meditative tone, which is none other than that of the English Bible itself. One cannot, therefore, say that the ear or the soul of his reading public was unprepared for such a music; there was a certain analogy that was dimly perceived, and proved so efficient that the epic which Macpherson declared to be primitive, and whose fragments he dated to the third century, acquired something of the majesty of the Scriptures.

The development of Ossianism in Europe was destined to become one of the channels through which English literature exercised a most important influence in the formation of the European Romantic movement. The exclamative measure peculiar to the rhythm of the Ossianic poems was to leave its mark upon the work of several generations.

3. Percy and Chatterton.—The *Reliques* of Percy[1] (1765) show the direct influence of the suggestive themes of older English poetry. The taste of the crowd had altered but little towards the "ballads" or poems of popular inspiration, with their touches of human appeal or of humour—for this reason, perhaps, that such verse had a strong and simple flow, while the refrains and emphatic repetitions gained an easy hold upon the memory. But with the Civil Wars a deteriorating effect was wrought upon this kind of poetry which, until then, had retained to a great extent its vital interest; the most ancient of the ballad themes, with their robust and naïve simplicity, began to disappear save in the more remote country districts; the national heritage was unknown in the circles of the learned or in fashionable society. Already, however, from the time of Addison to that of Gray, there comes into existence a small élite whose interest is awakened in the ancient forms of poetry; and a few publications of some of the old-time texts[1] begin to revive them.

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[1] Thomas Percy, born in 1729, showed an active imagination and enquiring mind in many ways; interested himself in Scandinavian poetry, and published in 1765 three volumes of *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. He took an active part in the literary life of his day, became a bishop, and died in 1811. *Reliques*, ed. Wheatley, 1891. See Gaussen, *Percy*, 1908.

Percy is not uninfluenced by Macpherson; he claims that the "minstrels" of the English Middle Ages are the posterity of the Celtic "bards." From Addison, too, he derives some encouragement: *Chevy Chase,* a sensational discovery of the *Spectator,* is given a prominent place in the *Reliques.* Like Macpherson, though more sparingly, he takes liberties with the texts. His collection is a medley where the old jostles the new; the language of the ballads is most often modernised, and whole stanzas are thrown in with a view to bridge over the abrupt transitions in the narrative. Whilst Percy has a feeling as well as a respect for the touching, naïve pathos of these early themes, he does not dare to accept the bold directness of the popular taste; he must needs bring it somehow under the principles of classical art: Homer's precedent is called upon to justify it.

Percy's collection is thus far from representing either perfection in the matter of choice, or exactitude in reproduction. But such discrepancies count for little in this revival of Romance, which is not concerned with scientific scruples, in fact is opposed to them. It is only on the surface that this revival arises from certain well-defined suggestions; these, after all, are mere pretexts, the means rather than causes; and the more these means are pliable and amenable to influences, the more easily the movement spreads its activities. The liberties which Percy took with his texts have been to the advantage of his initiative. For the first time, the essential features of popular poetry of ancient days were brought to the notice of the educated reader. The instinct that had been blindly groping after regeneration in literature was now able to find what it was seeking in these pages; and such, in the long run, proved to be the case. They brought a salutary feeling of rejuvenation to the sensibility of a public grown tired of all the false nobility of diction and intensity of language. Here was to be found a spontaneity replete with energy. An archaic note, the more acceptable for being sober, and a simple style of expression, pointed the way to a renovation of literary taste. The resulting effect was as deep as it was lasting. For a whole age the strong rhythmic flow of the ballad form, together with the arresting appeal of the repeated phrases, was to exert an obscure influence over the literary instincts of the English people; and with the advent of Romanticism, we shall find this influence rising to the surface, assimilated and transformed, but still recognisable, and permeating the literature in many and diverse ways.

In the case of Chatterton[2] we have an example rather than an instrument of the growing hold of imagination over the intellectual life of the time, as of the fascination of mediævalism over imagination itself. If he has deceived many of his readers, his archaisms, as laboured as they are naïve, did not succeed in finding acceptance with the more enlightened among his contemporaries. The century which followed saw through his deceptive trickery, and unravelled all the means he used to gain his end. When all is said, his psychological case remains very significant. In certain respects he is the most romantic man of his age; his childhood is one long series of obsessing dreams, which unbalance any developing sense he may have possessed of reality; he yields to the allurement of this visionary existence, half believing in it, and so loses all sense of the value of truth. The ancient cathedral of Bristol, in the precincts of which he was brought up, instilled within him a longing for the Gothic past; he grew to love it in all its aspects, just as if it were some living being. But his hallucination was soon to lose its sincerity; it became more and more feigned, until it ended in the artful conscious practice of open fraud.

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[1] Several collections of unequal merit and varied contents were published in Scotland by Watson and Ramsay; in England by d'Urfey (1723) and Capell (1760); a collection of *Old Ballads* appeared in 1723; the *Muses' Library* (1737) was an anthology of English poetry to the seventeenth century.

[2] Thomas Chatterton, born at Bristol in 1752, was bound to an attorney. The Middle Ages began to fascinate him at an early date; he wrote modern poems, and imitations in the old style, which he attributed to an imaginary author of the fifteenth century, Rowley. He tried to gain the patronage of Walpole and failed; then endeavoured to eke out an existence in London by his pen; and all resources failing him, poisoned himself in his eighteenth year (1770). *Poetical Works,* ed. Roberts, 1906; *Rowley Poems,* ed. Hare, 1911. See the studies by Richter (Vienna, 1900); Russell, 1909; Ingram (*The True Chatterton*), 1910.

While his work contains little else than the promise of something better—an interesting study of its kind—it nevertheless reveals a temperament which in its elegiac mood, its touch of irony, its innate boldness of spirit, shows a mind in revolt with its time. The modern poems of Chatterton have a sweetness of expression, an atmosphere of feeling and an easy musical flow, but they lack originality. His pastiches of ancient poetry, with their composite language, their uncertain spelling, leave upon one an impression of strangeness, not unmixed with charm; and in several among them he has happily succeeded. It is the age of the Elizabethan renaissance, rather than that of Chaucer or that of Skelton, which is here recalled, and with greater skill. Again, Chatterton in his imitations of Spenserian verse displays the gift of a fine perception of metrical values.

In his epoch he was little else than a flitting apparition, a pathetic figure, a tentative personality. He invented nothing, but he contributed in restoring to a place of honour a tradition that stretched back beyond the years of Classicism. With the romantic writers, especially in France, he was to be hailed as the symbol of poetic destiny, in its unequal struggle with opposing reality.

4. **The Historians and Critics.**—The revival of romance, however, was also aided in another direction by a more exact knowledge of the past, and here the poets are replaced by the historians and critics. But this is not a question of dry history or rational criticism.

The school of Hume and Robertson, like that of Johnson, had evinced no sympathy with the Middle Ages, and at times had even shown an ill-disguised disdain for them. On the contrary, with such men as yielded willingly to the spirit of enthusiasm and sympathy, the Dark Ages which stretched back beyond the glory of the Renaissance years and the reign of an ornate, well-balanced Classicism were again infused with life; they were regarded with veneration, and it was acknowledged that they had a distinct and attractive charm.

Richard Hurd[1] is by no means a revolutionary; his opinion and conscious doctrine differ in no way from those of an orthodox classicist. But in matters pertaining to literature he allows himself the freedom of feeling. His intuition has led him unwittingly to accept principles which in themselves are subversive, and he enunciates them without recognising their true nature. He deprecates the idea of having only one model upon which to base good taste; he accepts of an independent order of "Gothic" beauty, which the progress of enlightenment may have outgrown, but whose legitimacy has never been destroyed. He thus takes up arms in behalf of originality and character as values in themselves; he is led to recognise the claims of the supernatural, as well as those of a belief in things unseen that escape the sway of reason.

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[1] 1720–1808. Appointed Bishop of Worcester; *Letters on Chivalry and Romance*, 1762; ed. Morley, 1911.

The Warton family[1] is associated with the literary revival of respect for the past in national tradition; from the father to the sons is transmitted the love of feudal architecture, as well as of a literature in which a vague mediævalism assumes a definite shape by being identified with Milton and Spenser. The *Essay on Pope* of Joseph Warton has all the ambition and ardour of a manifesto. In it he attacks the accepted view of the superiority of the rational poet, and lays down as a principle the sovereign rights of creative imagination.

For the theory of the importance of imagination, as a legitimate and fundamental part of all art, is now being gradually recognised, even while imagination itself is reviving as a living force. The æsthetics of the eighteenth century are setting towards the romantic ideal long before the new poetry has finally defeated the old. The question raised in the quarrels between the Ancients and the Moderns had been solved, to all intents and purposes, by the victory of the former; but the modern idea persisted in a latent state; it grew active again just before the close of the classical era. In opposition to the accepted doctrine of direct imitation in art, it upheld the rights of originality, putting forward the claims of genius, that is to say, maintaining that the artist should be free to imagine and to create in absolute independence. Three years before the publication of the *Essay on Pope,* Hogarth the painter expressed a similar idea in connection with pictorial art;[2] and three years after the Essay had appeared, the poet Young, who from early youth had sought to dissociate himself from the vain crowd of servile imitators, published his *Conjectures on Original Composition,*[3] in which he defined the coming effort of the Romantic movement towards complete emancipation.

The *History of English Poetry* which Thomas Warton left is a work of singular conception. Planned on too large a scale, it tends to be diffuse, and is unfinished, while its wealth of erudition, remarkable certainly for the epoch, is seriously incomplete. It owes its permanent value to the sincere respect it shows for those ages which were conveniently classed as barbarian, to the clearly expressed notion of a continuous historical development, and lastly to the author's intuitive sense of national origins, and of the relationship which exists between the literature of a people and its entire civilisation.

To Tyrwhitt,[4] a contemporary of the Wartons, must be accredited the honour of having revealed the real Chaucer of the *Canterbury Tales.* He discovered the secret of his measure and of the harmony of his verse, thus succeeding where Dryden had failed. From now onwards the charm of a poetry of earlier date than the Renaissance was brought within the reach of every reader.

The revival of romance, however, was extending its field of activity in other directions. Curiosity had already been awakened with regard to the East and to those lands which lay beyond the seas, and this new interest was daily increasing; in fact, the eighteenth century is second only to the sixteenth as an epoch of exploration and fascinating tales of travel. In every clime the mysterious secret of the world was being penetrated, and yet there remained ample room for fresh discovery, so that the spirit of adventure and the intrepidity of the explorer lost nothing of their former glamour.[1]

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[1] The father, Thomas Warton, was Professor of Poetry at Oxford during the earlier years of the century, and contributed in restoring Milton to a place of honour in English literature. His elder son, Joseph (1722–1800), published odes (1746), edited the works of Pope (1797), after having already contributed an *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope,* 2 vols., 1756–82. The younger son, Thomas (1728–90), was also a poet (see above, Book III. chap. ii. sect. iii.), and the author of *Observations on the Faerie Queene of Spenser,* 1754, and *The History of English Poetry from the Close of the Eleventh to the Commencement of the Eighteenth Century,* 1774–81 (ed. Hazlitt, 1871). See Dennis, *The Wartons,* 1876 (Studies in English Literature); C. Rinaker, *Thomas Warton,* 1916; Van Tieghem, *La notion de vraie poésie,* dans *Le Préromantisme,* 1924.

[2] *The Analysis of Beauty, Written with a View of Fixing the Fluctuating Ideas of Taste,* 1753.

[3] *Conjectures on Original Composition, in a Letter to the Author of Sir Charles Grandison,* 1759. See above, Book III. chap. ii. sect. iii.

[4] Thomas Tyrwhitt (1730–86); *The Canterbury Tales of Chaucer, to which is added an Essay on His Language and Versification,* etc., 1775–78.

Within geographical limits that were more familiar, Johnson had visited the Hebrides; Gray the Lake District; Smollett and Sterne the lesser-known corners of France and Italy, while Fielding reached Portugal only to make it his grave. The lure of more remote and stranger lands had greater attraction for the men of letters. In *Rasselas* Johnson described an Abyssinia of his own invention; the *Vathek* of Beckford[2] in its turn interweaves picturesque descriptions with allegorical and moral allusions; but here the wealth of imagination revels in its own display, and this oriental tale, built up of the flimsy fabric of so delicate a dream, would be a lovely thing, if only its author had had to the end the courage of artistic freedom.

The feeling for nature, which has been growing stronger and stronger since the previous age, is closely connected with this renascence of imagination. The beauty of the countryside, still treated in a very general way, by writers whose emotional style is detrimental to careful delineation, is now tending to become the popular subject in literature. But after the nature painting in verse of Thomson and Gray there would have been little evidence of any real progress, had not Thomas Pennant[3] visited Scotland and Wales, and made careful note of his impressions; or Gilpin,[4] as the pioneer of a new art, drawn attention to the individual physiognomy of trees and plants, and to the infinite variety of aspects in the ever-changing scenes of wild nature. The spirit of keenness in the observation of the latter writer is a foretaste of the religion of Ruskin.

5. **The Rôle of Literary Deception.**—The "pleasures of imagination" as sung by Akenside[5] had been not so much the expression of real feeling, as the embodiment of certain abstract convictions, recorded in true classical style. Now, however, came the epoch when such "pleasures" represented the joys of actual experience, and could be indulged in by everyone.

The growth of this new enjoyment sheds a flood of light on the self-sufficient power of imagination, and on its independence in regard to the logical working of intellect; little stress was laid upon the question as to whether the object of the impulse had any real value; on the contrary, the world of the past and the life in distant lands were better understood and appreciated, and had a greater charm of attraction, the more actual fact became interwoven with legendary lore. The various realms of fancy were conquered one after another by literary cheats, or the authors of devout well-meaning lies. Macpherson, Chatterton and Percy himself have shown how, through the spell wrought by a powerful inner feeling which pours its own wealth over distant objects, poetry does indeed reach a higher truth than history itself. And this is confirmed by one who in those days penetrated farthest afield into yet another province of the domain of imagination—the realm of mystery and fear. When Walpole penned his *Castle of Otranto* (1764), the first tale of terror, he wrote as a sceptic, and for readers who eagerly lent themselves to the deceit of his invention.[1]

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[1] The relations of Cook appeared from 1768 to 1784; those of James Bruce (*Travels to Discover the Sources of the Nile*) in 1790; those of Hawkesworth in 1773, etc. In 1774–78 was published *The World Displayed, a Curious Collection of Voyages and Travels, with Introductions by Samuel Johnson*, 20 vols., etc.

[2] William Beckford (1760–1844): *The History of the Caliph Vathek*, etc., first written in French (1782); published in an English translation, revised by the author, in 1786; published in the original French text, Paris and Lausanne, 1787. Fonthill Abbey, a fancy Gothic edifice of great size, was built by him. See Melville, *Life and Letters of W. Beckford*, 1910.

[3] 1726–98: *Tour in Scotland*, 1771–75; *in Wales*, 1778–81.

[4] William Gilpin (1724–1804): *Remarks on Forest Scenery and Other Woodland Views*, 1791, etc.

[5] See above, Book III. chap. i. sect. vi.

To be consulted: Beers, *History of English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century,* 1899; *Cambridge History of English Literature,* vol. x. chap. x.; Dennis, *The Wartons* (Studies in English Literature), 1876; O. Elton, *A Survey of English Literature,* 1780–1830, 2nd ed., 1920; Farley, *Scandinavian Influences on the English Romantic Movement,* 1903; Hustvedt, *Ballad Criticism in Scandinavia and Great Britain during the Eighteenth Century,* 1916; Hurd, *Letters on Chivalry and Romance,* 1762 (ed. Morley, 1911); Phelps, *The Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement,* 1893; Van Tieghem, *Ossian en France,* 1917; idem, *Le Mouvement Romantique* (*Angleterre,* etc.), new ed., 1923; idem, *Le Préromantisme,* 1924; Theodore Watts-Dunton, *The Renascence of Wonder in Poetry* (*Chambers's Cyclopædia of English Literature,* vol. iii.), 1903.

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[1] See below, chap. iii.

CHAPTER II

THE RELIGIOUS AWAKENING

1. The Direct or Distant Influence of Methodism.—The rebirth of imagination is above all perceptible in general literature, in which it finds its most direct outlet of expression. At the same time, however, there develops another movement, no less profound, whose centre of action lies in the domain of religious beliefs. This awakening will also furnish one of the sources of the Romantic revival, but it will be a hidden source. In its early stages it concerns only a very limited set of university people; then its widening influence stretches farther afield to the masses, who are but distantly connected with culture; only later and by slow degrees does it work its way upward to the upper classes, and permeate them in their turn. Besides, without showing any animosity to art in general, as did Puritanism at an earlier date, it nevertheless favours a certain spiritual austerity, a rigorous code of morals, which, it must be admitted, are hardly compatible with the exercise of artistic pursuits. For diverse reasons such as these, the new creed had not an immediate nor a widespread effect upon literature.

But it did, however, exercise an influence that was as great as it was productive. Methodism—that is to say, the original and principal form of this religious awakening—modified the general attitude of minds towards the problems and duties which life brings in its train. The outcome itself of certain unfathomable psychological needs and of a secret agitation in the national conscience, it came in its turn to react as a stimulating emotional force upon the sensibility of the people. Pre-Romanticism as it developed borrowed from it certain elements, without which the oncoming revolution in literature would never have approved itself to the most entrenched instincts of the English character. Before Wordsworth and Coleridge could have taken their bold initiative, and by degrees made their work acceptable, a more friendly spirit had to be shown in England towards the poetry which appealed to the heart; the reading public had to acquire a more spontaneous facility for seeing and feeling according to the laws of mystical imagination; and there had to be a rekindling of thought, a regeneration of the whole inner soul. Romanticism, and the idealistic zeal which in part inspired it, owe something to the new exaltation in religious sentiment.

Apart from this general action, by far the more important, Methodism on the one hand, and the keener zeal which its presence aroused in the Anglican Church on the other, did exercise a well-defined influence on certain writers.

These, in this respect, can be conveniently studied together, since they form a group that found the real motive of their literary vocation in a faith whose impregnating force was the gospel of Methodism.

2. Wesley.—The founder of Methodism is too dominating a figure, and the written evidence of his apostolate of too great an interest, not to be given a place in the history of English literature.

John Wesley[1] is, first and foremost, an irradiating centre of mysticism.

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[1] John Wesley, born in 1703, was a student and later lecturer in Oxford University; became the central figure in a group of young men whose rigorous piety earned for them the name of Methodists. He dated his conversion—the result of a mystical experience—

Thus the rebirth in matters religious during the eighteenth century springs from a regeneration of feeling, from a psychological impulse analogous to that which already is slowly awakening a new interest in nature, and in turn will revive art. The creed of the deists, the rational religion of the philosophers, the apologetics of Butler and the lukewarm orthodoxy of the multitude, all found themselves in conflict with a new tone of the national conscience, set not by intelligence or by a more developed sense of practical values, but traceable to the faculty of intuition.

As usually happens in such a case, the odds are on the side of the belief whose vital force is greater; its prestige increases until the day when its virtual power becomes exhausted, and it is replaced by some other intuition. It cannot be said that there is any real originality in the belief upon which Methodism is founded—indeed, it is only part of a long tradition, handed down through successive generations of Christian mystics. The immediate inspirers of Wesley are William Law[1] and the Holy Fathers of Moravia, with whom he is personally acquainted. But to this inspiration he brings the gift of an indefatigable strength of will, an unequalled power of realising what he sets out to perform, a suppleness of mind in constant touch with reality, and an ability to adapt everything to utilitarian standards—a feature no less pronounced than the uncompromisingness of his moral faith.

A man of action, a preacher, an organiser, Wesley was only indirectly a writer; he never desired, never cared to be one. His numerous works on the teaching of religion, the propagation of the gospel and the task of rendering it intelligible to the masses, have only a circumstantial value which has passed with its day. But the hymns he has translated and which are for the most part from the German have the flow of fervent devotion, while his Diary, so full of the personality of the man himself, remains a document of indestructible significance. Its pages are the faithful record of the Methodist movement; its teaching is explained; the persecution it encountered, the progress it made, the broils it had with other religious denominations and political authorities, all are duly noted and commented upon; while an idea can also be gleaned of the constant effort that was necessary, the discipline and the gift of leadership that were required, to maintain the unity of a sect so great in number and dispersed over so wide an area. Here the history of society in the eighteenth century becomes pregnant with life, and certain of its most important phases, such as the growth of industrialism and the development of the artisan classes, are made clearer. But there is still more by way of revelation. All the psychology of a religious revival, the influences contributing to its preparation, the scenes of conversion, the contagious power of its influence over whole masses of the people, the spiritual anxiety and nervous unrest it gave rise to, the numerous individual backslidings, briefly the whole drama of the struggle between grace and human shortcomings, is here enacted before our eyes. And behind it all there is the commanding figure of Wesley himself, active, stimulating, resolutely bent on a gift and a sacrifice of self, through which there come out none the less the passionate energy of an apostle and the force of will of a prophet.

from 1738; but already before that date he had entered upon a career which made him break away from the orthodox Church and caused him to become, against his will, the founder of a sect, itself divided between rival branches. His whole life was spent in travelling, preaching and writing; despite hardships and even dangers he carried on the work of evangelisation among the poorer classes in Great Britain and in the American colonies. He died in 1791. *Works*, 32 vols., 1771–74; *Journal*, ed. Curnock, 1909, etc.; abridged ed., 1902. *Letters*, etc. (a selection), ed. Eayrs, 1916. See Southey, *Life of Wesley*, 1820; Tyerman, *Life and Times of Wesley*, 1870–71; Winchester, *Life of Wesley*, 1906; A. Léger, *La Jeunesse de Wesley*, 1910; idem, *Wesley's Last Love*, 1910; M. Lelièvre, *John Wesley*, Paris, 1922. For the Methodist Movement: Julia Wedgwood, *John Wesley*, etc., 1870.

[1] See above, Book II. chap. v. sect. ii.

His style is forcible, clear, sober and devoid of all rhetorical embellishment, although there is perceptible a veiled trace of classical scholarship reminiscent of university teaching. It can be humorous, even ironical, as occasion demands, but on the whole it maintains a straightforwardness and simplicity of expression prompted by one desire: to record, in a spirit of sincere humility, the truth of a daily experience raised by the revelation of the Divine to an infinite worth.[1]

The social influence of Methodist ideas in England cannot be overestimated; in fact, it represents a kind of crusade among the lower classes, to whom it brings the benefit of a moral culture, at the same time that it pleads their cause by appealing to the sympathetic interests of all. In this, its action may therefore be compared with that of the Christian Socialist movement of the nineteenth century; by strengthening the sense of civic solidarity, by bringing the prestige of religious faith to bear in appeasing the smouldering discontent of a new working class, whom modern industry had brought into existence. Methodism has contributed in making the established order of things more fundamentally secure. To it in part is due the saving of England from the contagion of French revolutionary ideas.

3. The Friends and Opponents of Methodism.—The age which witnessed the rise and growth of the Methodist movement regarded itself as still a rational one; so that the quieter minds of the time (not to speak of the hostile attitude of the orthodox) would openly gibe at the zeal of these believers. During the last sixty years or so of the century, the controversy which Methodism aroused became an aspect of the broader history of literature. It was considered good taste to rail against this new body of fanatics; and if we turn to the theatre or the novel, we find innumerable allusions of an aggressive or contemptuous character.

But the spirit of enthusiasm which animated the Methodist teaching, and which was very often justified by the sluggish attitude of the clergy themselves, was not without a certain contagious influence even on those who attacked the movement. The most noteworthy of the satires, that of Graves,[2] is much less virulent than it pretends to be; in the *Spiritual Quixote* we see the reaction of a moderate man, ineffusively sentimental, whose quiet moralising temper inveighs against the over-ardent spirit of a crusade that would seem, in certain ways, to outdistance his own religious conceptions. The bitter verve even of a Smollett is in its turn made more human by being brought into contact with Methodism, and his *Humphrey Clinker* shows an involuntary respect for the humble convert to the new cause.

To pass from the negative to the positive influence of Methodist teaching is to recognise that the evidence, while less abundant, is of greater importance. With James Hervey,[3] or Collins, or Smart,[4] the spreading force of this religious awakening can be clearly appreciated. Young, the author of *Night*

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[1] Other apostles of Methodism must be briefly mentioned: Charles Wesley (1707–88), brother of John, whose many hymns are still sung, and who in several of them shows true poetic inspiration; George Whitefield (1714–70), the most moving of the orators, and a favourite disciple, until the day when his Calvinism brought him into strife with the master; John W. Fletcher, of Franco-Swiss origin, Augustus Toplady, etc.

[2] Richard Graves, 1715–1804, one of the central figures in the social and literary group known as the "Warwickshire Coterie," which counted among its members Lady Luxborough, the poets Shenstone and Jago (see above, Book III. chap. iii. sect. v.), etc. Certain moral affinities, of which the chief was perhaps the love of a quiet countryside, served as the bond of union. In 1772 he published the *Spiritual Quixote, or the Summer's Ramble of Mr. Geoffrey Wildgoose*; in 1785, *Eugenius, or Anecdotes of the Golden Vale*, etc.

[3] See above, Book III. chap. ii. sect. iii. At Oxford he was the disciple of Wesley; later he joined the ranks of Whitefield and the Calvinists, a step which incensed his master and called forth an attack; but the *Meditations among the Tombs*, etc., are full of the fervour of Methodism.

[4] See above, Book III. chap. ii. sects. iii. and iv.

Thoughts, found himself in practical agreement more than in sympathy with the Wesleyans, who respected him despite the fact that he did not pay them homage. On the contrary, Brooke[1] agrees with their doctrines to the point of finding in them a main source of inspiration. As a writer he is mediocre; a lover both of realism and of mysticism, he is inclined to be too communicatively eloquent—a feature which tends to mar the novel where he gives a picture of the century as he saw it, and describes a virtuous soul as it ought to be. But there is in his pages a strange admixture of rugged strength and enthusiasm.

4. **Cowper.**—A great poet, though not one of the greatest, is indebted in no small way to the religious revival of the eighteenth century for part of the creative force of his inspiration, and thus can be legitimately connected with it.

Methodism, it must be remembered, is not the only form of this revival. In its turn it provokes in the ranks of the Anglican clergy a counter-movement as spiritually zealous in purpose as the other, and one which will continue to assert itself with the following century: evangelicalism. It is due to the direct influence of this second movement that William Cowper[2] is able to regain a certain sense of balance, despite the depression that weighs down upon his soul and alienates his reason; and to it also he owes the power of moral concentration which enables him to write. The work of Cowper is a foretaste of the coming renovation in literature. In some respects his poetry furnishes a rough outline of what we shall find in that of Wordsworth. At the core of his poetical creed there lies a faith, a healing principle, the fruit of painful experience. If he feels the craving for simplicity, and possesses the courage to be simple, such a gift arises from the feeling of kinship with mankind which personal suffering has tended more and more to strengthen; it is also traceable to the attitude he adopts of strict renunciation towards all that is external and superfluous in life, an opinion based upon a mystic certitude, at least an intuitive one. And it was just a simplicity such as this, enriched and encouraged by the knowledge of its own moral and artistic worth, that was required at this epoch; through no other means could English poetry have freed itself from the obsessing influence of classical rhythms.

Although the points of inner resemblance are very close, and the two poets' strains at times strikingly similar, there is still a great gulf between Cowper and Wordsworth. By nature he is the weaker of the two, and so is more the victim of his moral disease, from which he never completely recovers. His thought lacks the initiative to rise to the heights of philosophic idealism, from which a clearer vision can solve problems of art more decisively. Above all, in his youth, when the soul is open to influence, there is no French Revolution as in the case of Wordsworth, to bring in its train the shock of great revelations. His life pursues its course, still moulded by the social and literary traditions of the eighteenth century; he feels their weight, seeks to liberate himself, and, in a certain measure, succeeds. But it is only too late that he sees, as from afar, how one phase can replace another in the history of the world; and so he never desires to break off entirely with the past, never believes that such a thing is possible.

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[1] Henry Brooke (1703–83): *The Fool of Quality, or the Adventures of Henry, Earl of Morland,* 1766–70; this novel, which Wesley abridged at a later date, combines the spirit of Rousseau's teaching with that of Methodism (ed. Baker, 1906). See above, Book III. chap. i. sect. vi. The novel of John Moore, *Zeluco* (1786), with its philanthropical crusade against slavery, may be mentioned here as showing some affinities.

[2] William Cowper, born in 1731, the son of a country rector, was connected with one of the branches of the noble family of the Coopers. He studied at Westminster School and chose the law as his profession. The influences of a disappointed love and of a morbid timidity brought about an attack of madness, during which he attempted suicide; upon recovery, he took up his abode at Huntingdon in the home of his friends, the Unwins, who remained associated with him during his lifetime. He removed with them to Olney, where Newton, a curate, and one of the outstanding figures in the evangelical movement, exerted a deep influence over him. It was at his request that Cowper collaborated in a collection of religious poems, the *Olney Hymns,* 1779. He was still, however, an invalid, haunted by the thought of suicide. A series of eight satires (*Table Talk, The Progress of Error, Truth, Expostulation, Hope, Charity, Conversation, Retirement*), suggested to him by Mrs. Unwin, and several shorter pieces, composed the volume of *Poems* of 1782. Another friendship, that of Lady Austen, is the source of his principal work, *The Task* (1785). Among other poems one may mention *Tirocinium* and *John Gilpin.* He further translated Homer, Mme. Guyon, etc., into verse; and died in 1800. *Works,* ed. Southey, 1853–55; *Poetical Works,* ed. Benham, 1870; ed. Milford, 1911; *Correspondence,* ed. Wright, 1904; *Selected Letters,* ed. Lucas, 1911; ed. Frazer, 1912. See Sainte-Beuve, *Lundis,* vol. xi., 1868; Boucher, *W. Cowper,* 1874; Goldwin Smith, *Cowper,* 1880; S. A. Brooke, *Theology in the English Poets,* 1880. The autobiography of the Rev. J. Newton (*Out of the Depths*) was issued in a new edition by Hamilton in 1916.

Such is the source of the mixed character of his poetry. His religious hymns have at times a fresh beauty of expression, a purity of thought that is truly inspired; but the lyric outburst of passionate zeal might have attained to greater heights; it is here controlled by a stern sense of piety, curbed by a measure regular to an excess, and made to conform to a tenor of imagery and style that is lacking in originality. Every page, every line breathes the effusion of a believing soul, and yet lacks the sustained effort that makes for sublimity in poetry.

In the poems of 1782, the trend of thought is obviously didactic. The various arguments of the thesis are worked out with explicit and laborious care; in fact, the classical ideal of a versified demonstration, a purely rational one, still lends its main characteristic to this branch of his work. Whole stretches of the development are merely arid; the sombre colouring of theological thought, together with the insistent tone of the moralising, enhance our impression of prosaism.

But there is already a marked progress. While the language and rhythm may show no departure from conventional standards, the originality of the poet is everywhere in evidence. His convictions are of too strong a nature to be calmly expressed; the discussion is raised to a higher plane, and his verse soars with impassioned eloquence. The form itself becomes animated; it abandons all the niceties of convention, and aims more at acquiring a spontaneous vigour and a perfect frankness, which, it must be admitted, are often achieved. Some of these poems, as, for example, *Expostulation,* where the call of conscience is more immediately perceptible, are in almost every line of superior merit. No longer is the poet the slave of the antithetic couplet of Pope, but as a metrist he reminds us rather of Churchill and Dryden. He can now give expression to his innermost feelings; his tone is still moralising, but it is deeply loaded with emotion; and it is this assurance of absolute sincerity that lends to his verse a convincingly simple accent, in itself a precious contribution to literature.

The Task represents a further step towards independence, as the theme, an artificial one, readily lends itself to a fully fanciful development. There is again evidence of the desire to convince and instruct, but the poem is essentially the expression of a soul; and the free effusion of modern lyricism is the ideal that secretly attracts and guides it. The seasons and the aspects of an ever-changing nature furnish, as it were, the setting to this inner life. The art of Cowper may be less skilled, less polished and supple than that of Thomson, but it has something that is more robust; just as his sensibility which, at times, can be described as almost feminine, has here, however, the suggestion of greater strength. His verse possesses a felicity difficult to define; an individual charm, which emanates directly from the soul, and to which contribute the faculty of feeling and thinking with noble beautiful breadth, the gift of expressing thought with a delicacy at once original and picturesque, or, as the case may be, with a strength of concision and spirited forcefulness. Here he shows himself a master in the art of blank verse, with a very accurate sense of the rhythmic flow best suited to this particular form of prosodic eloquence.

Among his numerous short poems, there are several in which the spirit of ecstasy is equal to the highest Romanticism, and the emotion of serene wonder may be compared with Wordsworth's. But, generally speaking, the inspiration is sober and homely, with a flavour of malice, a petulant humorous gaiety, and at times a touch of the naïve.

By the combination of all the elements which constitute his style, Cowper reminds us of the past, no less than he suggests the future. Steeped in the classics, he writes Latin verse, translates Homer and Horace. In his happier moments—not the most careful and painstaking, but those when his ardent inspiration acts as it were spontaneously, exalts and purifies both the emotion and the form—he creates a genuinely classical expression; his verse then has all the power and conciseness of simplicity, without the laboured artifice that is ever striving towards elegance. At the same time his imagination, through an instinctive craving for health, becomes most often sober and disciplined. And his realism in the calm and faithful portrayal of life shows the artist's power of quiet and clear attention.

But Cowper is not a poet whose sole aim is to reproduce the minute notings of his mind. His poetry breathes a sympathy which shows a long association with the world of reality, an intimate knowledge of its ways. It is a poetry of the home, set amid the peaceful surroundings of a green countryside, so typically English; its atmosphere is that of a national tradition revived and fully conscious of its worth. It extols religion, morality, the family, the fatherland, in the spirit of a middle class which no longer hesitates to assert its own preferences against those of aristocratic taste. The themes it treats of are still commonplaces, but they represent the elementary truths of the heart, rather than of intelligence. Its quiet effusion is full of a tender pity, whether it plead the cause of the prisoner, or the slave, or the dumb animal. Its trend is far from being revolutionary, even if it seek to make sentiment a guiding rule in social intercourse. It virtually contains humanitarianism, and the radical application of Christian ideas to daily life. Its love for nature has not the ardour of passion, but a keen though subdued warmth, and feeds on the freshest perceptions.

All those elements will later be found in the making of Romanticism itself. And as Cowper shows us, moreover, a tremulous morbid anguish, a disquietude of soul in which there is something of the indefinable, a series of tragic religious visions against which reason cannot react, an attachment to the concrete world instinct with a desperate craving for balance and health, it is possible to place him, if his personality be viewed as a whole, among the immediate predecessors of the Lake poets.

His letters have a most attractive charm, a most real sincerity. They are devoid of the slightest affectation as of the faintest vanity. The man in Cowper is fully revealed; we see all the workings of his wavering heart, his great desire to pour forth his soul, the finesse of his judgment, his gift of gentle raillery, his ability to lose himself in daily life, with its reassuring regularity. Seldom has there been found so little egoism in an invalid; and the record of that existence, always overshadowed by the menace of fate, works upon us the soothing spell which is the privilege of genuine innocence.

To be consulted: S. A. Brooke, *Theology in the English Poets*, 1880; *Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. x. chap. xv., vol. xi. chap. iv.; Hunt, *Religious Thought in England to the End of the Eighteenth Century*, 1873; Léger, *La Jeunesse de Wesley*, 1910; G. Lacey May, *Some Eighteenth Century Churchmen*, 1921; Overton, *English Church from the Accession of George I. to the End of the Eighteenth Century*, 1906; Leslie Stephen, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, 1902; Swallow, *Methodism in the Light of the English Literature of the Last Century*, Münchner Beiträge, etc., Leipzig; Tyerman, *Life and Times of Wesley*, 1871; J. Wedgwood, *John Wesley*, 1870.

CHAPTER III

THE PRE-ROMANTIC NOVEL

1. The Importance of the Novel of Terror.—Long before the close of the eighteenth century, the various psychological elements which go to form Romanticism have already made their appearance in turn; but the general state of the social and literary life of the day is as yet unfavourable to any initiative likely to effect the decisive liberation of form.

It is chiefly in poetry that form is an indispensable factor; in prose it plays a part of less importance. Thus the novel, which tends to become the chief instrument of artistic expression in prose, allows all the latent possibilities of the coming Romantic revival to combine in a union so complete, that it would be difficult not to recognise in it an immediate forerunner and a fully developed example of Romantic literature.

The novels of Mrs. Radcliffe represent from every point of view a kind of early Romanticism, inferior both in the moral substance and in the artistic value of the contents, but allied by virtue of certain deeper analogies to those early efforts in verse which revealed the original genius of Wordsworth and Coleridge. The reason is that it adds to the elements already in evidence a new resource of inspiration rich in powerful and subtle effects: the search for terror and, on a wider scale, the probing of the mysterious.[1] And here we have a case of natural sequence in moral evolution. A feeling of wonder mingled with terror provides a new thrill which, in reality, owes its origin to the cultivation of certain other emotions; the need for it is naturally created by the merging of sentimentalism and fancy. The basis for the novel of terror is a mood in which the power of imagining is brought to bear most closely on that of feeling, after the latter has been led by frequent exercise to crave for refined satisfactions.

2. The Preparation: Mackenzie, Walpole, Clara Reeve.—The novel of Mrs. Radcliffe is anticipated by a series of preparatory attempts. Certain shrewd or, as the case may be, enthusiastic writers try their hands at what will next be the perfect use of the new method of artistic expression, which resulted from the development of the technique of sentiment.

The shrewd were first in the field; and here again the preparation in literature of the coming of Romanticism is through its early stages consciously artificial. The transformation longed for in style is yet so slow a process, that men of letters with a gift of discernment take it upon themselves to satisfy this need, even by the most superficial means. Intellectually alert and clear-sighted, they also experience what others feel, but not to a greater degree. Thus with Walpole, the creator of the novel of terror, it is not so much an exceptional susceptibility to emotion which prompts his pen, as a distinct sense of what is wanted in literature, coupled with a bold versatile mind.

In the process of its development, this particular kind of novel goes through the stage of sentimentalism; it is the cultivation of feeling for its own sake that in turn leads to the search for the semi-morbid forms of emotion. The systematic enjoyment of intense feeling brings about a complete moral inversion: the love of that pleasing kind of mental suffering, a sense of terror skilfully suggested. In this respect the work of Mackenzie,[1] although posterior in date by several years and very different from that of Walpole, must nevertheless be directly connected with it.

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[1] There was nothing absolutely new in this; it was already in evidence in the works of Young, Collins, Thomas Warton, and the writers of the "graveyard school" of poetry. See the *Ode to Fear* of Collins, etc.

Mackenzie had no original talent. He is the disciple of Sterne, and owes much to Rousseau. His best-known novel—*The Man of Feeling*—is mediocre. It is a deliberate imitation of the *Sentimental Journey;* but the discontinuity which Sterne, with his exquisite feeling for nuance and detail, had transformed into a resource of art, here loses its value, and nothing redeems the thinness of the theme. The psychology also is lacking in subtlety; there is no complication with the hero of Mackenzie; he becomes the easy defenceless victim of the paralysing emotion which sensitiveness experiences at every turn of life. For the world, as Rousseau made out, is here the triumph of a cruel corruption; and the soul that Nature has formed of necessity finds itself continually struggling and suffering. Thus the pessimism of the Romantics definitely shows itself to be the inevitable fruit of too keen a sensibility.

In other respects, it is to Richardson that Mackenzie owes most, although he never ceases to be the ardent admirer of Rousseau. A theme of social philanthropy—an appeal against slavery—adds more variety to the pathos of his *Julia de Roubigné,* which is, perhaps, altogether, his best work. But here again we have the skilful adaptation of another's ideas, without the least real originality. His sentimentalism is rather shallow, as his life proved it to be; and although much of his inner self is concerned in the voluntary experience of the exaltation of feeling, it is nevertheless obvious that such exaltation is affected and artificial. *The Man of Feeling* betrays a kind of secret hesitancy; it is at once the vehement apology of sensibility, and the denunciation, by an instinct that wants to free itself and live, of the deadly conflict waged with the very laws of existence, when once sensibility is given over to the freedom of its own impulses.

Mackenzie's work is chiefly interesting as a sign. With him, and considering only the more obvious trend of his novels, we find that the pleasure of feeling and suffering—and of dying through the delightful yet fatal excess of a pain which has in it the essence of nobility and happiness—is proclaimed as an end sufficient in itself. Thus sentimentalism, as a free and dominant psychological tendency, comes into still greater relief here than in the pages of Sterne; and the close association of grief and joy, which at times seem to blend into one indistinguishable feeling, is brought to such a degree, as to render not only possible but logical all the moral complexities, all the paradoxical perversions of the emotions, in which Romanticism will like to indulge.

The Castle of Otranto, by Horace Walpole,[2] is the clever achievement of an enquiring mind, which had enough intuition to divine a widespread need of the public, but not enough genius—or might one say sincerity—to create a viable illusion.

It is very difficult to-day to welcome the suggestion which this novel seeks to work out in a way as emphatic as it is broad. The success it enjoyed in its day goes to prove how ready lay a still untouched vein of feeling, and how willing the contemporary imagination was to meet the writer half-way. The poet Gray, whose taste was of the most delicate, shared this impression of vague terror and anxious suspense. He granted the book that half-belief which allows the feeling of the supernatural to be born and grow. But when the use of the supernatural is abused in order to bring about greater and still greater effects, the whole thing becomes absurd. In the reader of to-day the emotion either is never produced, or vanishes very quickly.

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[1] Henry Mackenzie, born at Edinburgh in 1745, studied law and became a member of the brilliant literary society of the Scottish capital. He published three novels: *The Man of Feeling,* 1771; *The Man of the World,* 1773; *Julia de Roubigné,* 1777; edited two periodicals: *The Mirror* and *The Lounger,* 1779–87; wrote for the theatre; interested himself in German literature at a time when it was unknown in Scotland; held a high financial post, and died at the advanced age of eighty-six (1831). *Works,* 8 vols., 1807–8.

[2] 1764; ed. C. Spurgeon, 1923; see above, Book III. chap. vii. sect. v.

The setting chosen by Walpole for his novel is mediæval Italy; this points to a close connection between the psychological origins of the novel of terror, and those which prompted the evocation of a picturesque past. As is shown by the term "Gothic Novel," the strangeness and mystery of a distant age, itself a prey to superstition, and wonderfully fitted to re-create the atmosphere of emotional belief, served as a model and encouragement to an instinct, in quest of new and more potent means of self-satisfaction. In a first preface, Walpole avoided any reference to the reality of his facts; but in a second he admitted his invention, and sought to justify it by rather far-fetched arguments.

Stripped of all its atmosphere of witchcraft, the novel to-day is lifeless. Walpole with his clear and rational outlook upon life is by no means a poet; and when he attempts to deal with the mysterious, not only are his methods awkward, but he defeats his own end by placing his mystery in the broad light of a full fact, instead of leaving it enshrouded in the dimness so strongly suggestive. To make matters worse, he proceeds to tack on to the principal action of the story a kind of intrigue conceived in the worst pseudo-classical taste. The sentiment of the whole book is cold and inefficient. But we must not forget that in itself that general effort to rouse a pleasing anguish in the reader was a happy one, and the novel of Walpole retains all the interest attached to the first work of a series. To it can be traced all those stories whose main interest centres round the mediæval castle, with its grimy walls and its disturbing atmosphere of uncanny illusion.

Clara Reeve[1] has admitted her indebtedness to the work of Walpole, but this does not keep her from criticising his novel with accuracy of judgment. Besides, she is more than a mere imitator. The novel of terror as we have it from her pen is coloured with a sentimentality more purely middle-class; it divests itself of the aristocratic and slightly free character that originally clung to it. Its general tone is more sincere because, following the model of Richardson, the emotional element has in it something of a moralising nature; it can henceforth strike root in great general needs of the soul, which conscience accepts, or regards as normal and necessary for its well-being. Then only does it take its legitimate place among the recognised literary kinds. Clara Reeve is more cautious in her use of the supernatural; she does not exclude it, but makes it more reconcilable with reason, and through that very means tends to spread it over the whole tenor of a plot, while the emotion itself assumes a more distinctly psychological character. As a work of art, *The Old English Baron* is decidedly mediocre; but it has this advantage over *The Castle of Otranto*, that it effectively prepares the literary public for the novels of Mrs. Radcliffe, as well as for a type of feminine Romanticism which, since that date, has remained a distinct vein of English literature.[2]

3. **Mrs. Radcliffe.**—The spell of Romanticism in all its potency was first brought home to English readers by a writer of original gifts, whose name to-day, however, is as good as forgotten.[3]

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[1] 1729–1807; *The Champion of Virtue, a Gothic Story*, 1777; the 2nd ed. bore the title, *The Old English Baron*, and was reprinted frequently during the nineteenth century (Cassell's National Library, 1888). *The Progress of Romance*, 1785.

[2] An intermediary writer between Clara Reeve and Mrs. Radcliffe would be Charlotte Smith (*Emmeline, or the Orphan of the Castle*, 1788; *Ethelinde, or the Recluse*, 1789, etc.), whose effects of terror have a discreet and subtle quality. The *Vathek* of Beckford (see above, chap. i.) may be compared, in parts, with this kind of sensational writing.

[3] Ann Ward, born in London, 1764, belonged to a middle-class family; married Wm.

The work of Mrs. Radcliffe owes its non-survival to internal failings: the diffuse length of her novels, the monotony of a style that is lavish in description and overloaded with detail, the air of timidity and convention in the characters, as well as in the philosophy of life. And more important still, the authoress is the victim of a decision which in the hands of a superior talent might have proved just and fertile, but which, imperfectly realised, only leads to disastrous results. Her reason and her conscience refuse to admit, save in one posthumous novel, the existence of the supernatural properly so called; and although in many of her pages she does create an impression of dread and mystery, she eventually reduces it, through a full explanation, to nothing more than an illusion.

This method is traceable perhaps, in some measure, to the general atmosphere of the closing years of the century, when people were yielding more and more to the influence of tender illusions, without actually abandoning the standards of reason. Yet the chief source is really to be found in a religious aversion towards any spell in which the influence of evil might lurk. Mrs. Radcliffe is a strict Protestant, who looks askance at what she deems to be part of Roman Catholic or popular superstition, even although she cannot resist its fascinating appeal.

To explain away the supernatural is an unpardonable error, if the feeling of dread which the artist wishes to evoke demands a belief in the supernatural. When once the reader has been undeceived, that is to say, enlightened, it is a more difficult and even impossible task to again create in the course of a novel, or series of novels, the atmosphere of illusion. And this is a danger which Mrs. Radcliffe fails to elude. With infinite trouble she labours to piece together the threads of dark intrigues, utilising the resources of underground passages, secret doors, rusty daggers, and ethereal music; but to us of to-day all these material factors, with their laborious fragility, are something more than merely unconvincing; they are a source of annoyance, and have a deadening effect upon the whole work.

But at the same time she had a vague intuitive sense of an art whose subtle spell is potent only when life, in all its actuality, merges into the uncertain regions of the ominous and the possible. Besides their artificial plots, her novels have an atmosphere, in which her gift for intense and delicate suggestion finds ample scope. As each story unfolds itself, there is the constant feeling that not only the scenic descriptions, but the general happenings, together with the indefinable sense of apprehension which the writer can so skilfully impart, all combine to suggest that our convictions are not rigidly limited by material existence, and that what has seemed hitherto to be definite is now a flowing, floating symbol of uncertainty. Such a feeling—which is really a great innovation in English literature—does not necessarily imply belief in the supernatural. The familiar aspect of things in general has now acquired a mysterious colouring, a vague sense of impending change which excites the nervous emotion of the reader; and this is the so-called "thrill" in the novels of Mrs. Radcliffe, which was the secret of her great success among her contemporaries. Even to-day its fascination has not entirely lost its magic power.

Radcliffe, a lawyer and journalist. Her novels include: *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*, 1789; *The Sicilian Romance*, 1790; *The Romance of the Forest*, 1791; *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 1794; *The Italian*, 1797. An account of her travels in Holland and on the Rhine appeared in 1795. Her life was almost that of a recluse. She died in 1823, leaving a novel, *Gaston de Blondeville*, which appeared in 1826. A collected edition of her poems (1815–16), was published in 1834. *Novels*, Ballantyne's Library, vol. x. (preface by Sir W. Scott); *Udolpho* (Routledge), 1903; *The Italian*, idem, 1884. See G. Meyer, *Les Romans de Mrs. Radcliffe* (*Revue Germanique*, 1909); D. Scarborough, *The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction*, 1917; MacIntyre, *Ann Radcliffe in Relation to Her Time*, 1920; E. Birkhead, *The Tale of Terror*, 1921.

This emotion is not to be included in the category of ordinary fears, nor is it to be compared with the violent direct efforts of melodrama. It is restrained, and can boast even of a certain nobility. By virtue of all the suggestions which go to make it—the picturesqueness of setting, the moving nature of the action, the confused sense of an obscure spirituality in the intents of the material world to man himself—it is a product of a very complicated nature, into which enter, one might say, all the elements of Romanticism. It possesses a quality peculiar to itself of spreading its influence, of being contagious, of transforming anything which it touches or which lies in its immediate environment; it is therefore essentially poetic. The use which Wordsworth and Coleridge will make of the subtle associations which link up the realities of everyday existence with the highest emotions will not be found to owe much to the example set by Mrs. Radcliffe; but it will in the main generalise her principles, give them greater preciseness, and eke them out by a whole philosophy.

What renders this affinity more acceptable, and at the same time more striking, is that with Mrs. Radcliffe the feeling for nature is so strong that her art of description becomes almost the cult of an ideal. Her verse is not devoid of talent, but her pictures in prose are remarkable for their variety, their wealth of colouring and their charm. The English novel has not till her time known anything quite equal to this talent. In most cases the writer has never set foot in the countries she describes—Central France, the Pyrenees, the Apennines, Venice, Southern Italy—but she gleans her inspiration from travel notes, re-creates, transposes or invents at will, with all the force and courage of a well-endowed imagination. The Lake poets will not surpass her in their feeling for or painting of the aspects of the English countryside; their love of nature will not be more passionate; and from the mountain heights, or the forests, in which she places the novel which perhaps will offer the most pleasant reading, because it is penned when discretion is still one of her gifts, there will radiate a lasting freshness and sublimity over her imaginings, which in other respects are to feel the power of time.

As a portrayer of character, Mrs. Radcliffe is weak in the art of infusing life into her personages, composed for the most part of innocent, sensitive young girls who are persecuted, or of aged servants, ruined noblemen, traitors and bandits. They are soon forgotten, with the exception of the Schedoni of *The Italian*, who stands out in bold relief. This character with one or two others has furnished Romanticism, as has been rightly pointed out, with the dominant traits of a general type of physiognomy that will scarcely be found to vary; one of its notable products is the Byronian hero. In this way it will be seen that Mrs. Radcliffe had an immediate influence upon the forces at work in the literature of the next generation. Her novels were widely read, and left an impression on many of the minds of her time. But the most fruitful result of her work is probably that by transforming the common idea of terror into something higher and nobler, by making it more acceptable to the feelings as well as to the moral scruples of all, she prepared the way for the teaching of Wordsworth, when he showed how a lesson could be reaped from a wonder that was all a mystic illusion.

4. **Lewis.**—The influence of Lewis,[1] whose talent is decidedly more sensational, appeared to be greater than Mrs. Radcliffe's in the eyes of their contemporaries; it is more on the surface, and therefore easy to estimate.

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[1] Matthew Gregory Lewis, Born in London, 1775, was the son of a highly placed official; studied at Oxford; travelled in Germany, where he was deeply influenced by the spirit of romantic wonder. In his twentieth year, he wrote his first novel, *Ambrosio, or the Monk* (1795); owing to the scandal it created in public opinion, he was forced to revise it before it appeared in a 2nd ed. He exploited the same vein in other stories: *Tales of Terror*, 1799; *Tales of Wonder*, 1801; *Romantic Tales*, 1808. His theatrical works include *The*

The Monk represents the work of a very young man; a fact which is obvious from the crude nature of the emotions he seeks to rouse, as well as from the naïvety of the artistic means he employs. Without the slightest restraint, he proceeds to exploit the thrill of conscious and pleasing terror, compounding it with others of a kindred nature, such as that prompted by sensual desire or by the loathsome sight of some physical horror. So that the psychological development begun by Walpole, but of which the seeds are really to be found in the work of Richardson, here reaches its final stage of sheer unrelieved morbidity. The novel of Lewis enjoyed a success due to its fascinating power of striking a terror with which a secret feeling of repulsion was not unmixed; but very soon public taste turned away from so open a revelation of affinities about which consciousness preferred to remain in ignorance. Yet the Satanism of Lewis had now supplied the extreme stimulus which imaginations set loose longed after; from it were derived some of the essential elements of the darkest aspect of Romanticism; and thus its influence can be regarded in the light of a liberation.

With Lewis, we leave behind the mood of middle-class sentimentalism, and come back to an artificial literature in the manner of Walpole. *The Monk* is destitute of all moral depth; its atmosphere is heavy and unreal; the characterisation is over-simplified, like that of the melodrama. Where Mrs. Radcliffe could often instil so subtle an effect into her suggestions of the supernatural, Lewis handles his subject-matter directly and roughly. The juvenile ardour which lies at the core of his work, and which, unaware of its own secret nature, so clumsily conceals itself in the guise of a superficial didactic intent, no longer provokes any sympathetic response in us. But if the book is hopelessly lacking in warmth, it still preserves some strength in the intensity of vision which the author devotes to the portrait of his hero. *The Monk* forced itself, as it were, upon its generation. Even Mrs. Radcliffe may have been indebted to it for the conception of her Schedoni; and the imitations of German "Ballads," written in a language often vulgar, but not destitute of a certain sense of dramatic effect and rhythm, supplied the earliest models in England of the poetry of terror.[1]

To be consulted: E. Birkhead, *The Tale of Terror,* 1921; *Cambridge History of English Literature,* vol. x. chap. iii., vol. xi. chap. xiii.; M. Conant, *The Oriental Tale in England in the Eighteenth Century,* 1908; W. Dibelius, *Die Englische Romanskunst,* 1910; O. Elton, *A Survey of English Literature,* 1780–1830, 1920; A. M. Killen, *Le Roman terrifiant ou Roman noir, etc., et son influence sur la Littérature française,* etc., 1915; C. F. MacIntyre, *Ann Radcliffe in Relation to Her Time,* 1920; Raleigh, *The English Novel,* 1904; D. Scarborough, *The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction,* 1917; Yvon, *Horace Walpole,* 1924.

Castle Spectre, 1797; *The East Indian,* 1799; *Alphonso,* 1801, etc. *The Bravo of Venice* was a translation from the German, 1805. He met Scott, Southey, Shelley, Byron; and died in 1818, leaving in manuscript the *Journal of a West India Proprietor,* 1834. *The Monk,* ed. Baker, 1907. See *Life and Correspondence,* 1839.

[1] The vogue of the "novel of terror" continued after Lewis; see below, Book V. chap. ii. sect. 2.

CHAPTER IV

RATIONALISM

1. The Persistence of Certain Rational Elements.—A special study of philosophical thought during the last thirty years or so of the eighteenth century shows that thinkers, generally, have been content to maintain the traditions handed down from the preceding age.

It will be remembered also that these traditions were of an already complicated nature, and it is not to be wondered at if, while keeping their dominant characteristics, they tend more and more to change under the effect of the moral and social evolution in progress. The influence of a diffuse sentimentalism is now beginning to colour and penetrate the doctrines of the rationalists. There is no doubt that the psychological and philosophical views of Hartley, Priestley and Price are, on the whole, subservient to rational standards of thinking, which often lead to very daring conclusions; on the other hand, however, the Scotsmen, Read and Dugald Stewart, represent quite a different type of thinker, and claim intuition and experience as their guides. In the same way, while theology, ethics, æsthetics, political economy, history itself, whether older or newer branches of knowledge, are instinct with an unreserved confidence in the power of reason, and while the moral sciences are being founded or developed on the basis of similar principles and methods with those of the natural sciences, still the theorists, by continually referring either to the concrete or to feeling, or by subjecting reason to the requirements of actual fact or practical issues, do not allow it to be forgotten that a transformation has begun in the national thought, which leads it back to the fuller cognisance of its own originality. Without denying the great part played by intellectualism—utilitarianism itself will prove to be a philosophy of the intellect—the English genius, at the same time as Romanticism is liberating its innermost and truest artistic instinct, more and more exactly realises itself in an attitude of mind at once empirical and idealistic.

The paradox of the whole romantic age is that the signs of that realisation should remain of rather secondary importance. There is thus evidence of a certain discord between abstract theories on the one hand, and those latent, concrete doctrines which are called literature and moral life, on the other. This estrangement, more apparent than real, can be explained; and indeed it tends to disappear in the light of those simple affinities which always exist in individual cases between art and thought.

The great utilitarian movement, which provides, as it were, so singular a background of clear and calculating intellectualism to the fervour of the English Romanticists, is connected with the social evolution; it voices certain of the strong desires of the middle classes. But these desires are neither those of the heart nor those of the conscience; they represent a clear sense of interest, the spirit which aims at material realisation, the taste for economic independence, all of which find strong encouragement in the spheres of industry and commerce; and these tendencies answer to one main aspect of the English bourgeoisie, to features which are already in evidence, but are intensified by the industrial revolution. Thus the psychological temperament of this class is being modified; and literature just as thought, which for the last hundred years had been especially its debtors for all that suggested practical sense, sentiment or morality, will now in turn, and as forcibly, receive from it suggestions of a dry egoistic individualism. But while these suggestions may often appear to play a dominant part, it will never be an absolutely exclusive one; nor will they destroy the effect, with the general mass of the nation, of an essential psychological duality; for with the middle years of the nineteenth century will come a revolt, when all that is instinctively opposed to them will openly defy their excessive authority.

2. Philosophers, Theologians and Moralists.—The desire for a rational explanation of the problems of mind produces some rather remarkable results in the work of Hartley, Priestley and Price.[1]

These writers have certain traits in common, although their ideas can only be said to resemble one another in a very general way; they show a kind of hard vigour in their earnest pursuit of truth, proceeding from a great strength of character, but allied to a sense of reality, which often tends to limit in an arbitrary manner the range of their conceptions. If Hartley did not create the theory of the association of ideas, he certainly developed it, and in this way prepared the main theme of utilitarian psychology in the nineteenth century. At the same time, he opens the way to the psycho-physiological theories of consciousness, in that he traces the various faculties of perception and memory, and indeed every kind of mental activity, to what he terms the "vibrations" of the nerve centres. Thus, the progress of his ideas leads him towards a pantheistic materialism; but he reacts against it, upholds the authority of Divine revelation, and works out a new theology. Priestley, on the other hand, is more rational on this point and puts aside the idea of belief in a soul, seeking rather to establish the correlation of mind and body: but while he adopts the theory of association, he rejects that of the nervous vibrations; and his social opinions, strongly based on the experimental idea of an interest that is common to society as a whole, and constitutes its exclusive end, anticipate the political empiricism of Bentham. Price, full of zeal for the rights of the citizen, and the apostle of American Independence as of the French Revolution, is essentially the type of the British "intellectual"; but he attacks the teaching of Locke and Hume by endowing the reason with the power of forming new ideas, and firmly maintains that the qualities of good and evil are intuitional perceptions of the understanding.

These authors are not writers in the strict interpretation of the term; their most original thoughts were accessible only to the initiated; so that the general public was concerned only with their political or religious doctrines. The Scottish school of philosophers owed its relative popularity to the fact that its tendencies harmonised with the sentiments of the masses. Throughout the whole of this age, the penetrating scepticism of Hume is a constant menace to any affirmation put forward on behalf of the moral conscience, with the result that the unrest in the religious world calls forth a host of refutations and polemical pamphlets. The most convincing arguments on the conservative side were those of Campbell, Beattie, Oswald and Reid.[1] These writers, indeed, appealed to an instrument of knowledge which everyone claims to possess, namely, common sense.

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[1] David Hartley (1705–57); entered the Church, but later became a medical practitioner; *Observations on Man*, 1749. See Bower, *Hartley and James Mill*, 1881.—Joseph Priestley (1723–1804), son of an artisan, was a Presbyterian minister, then joined the Unitarians; for his radical opinions he was made a French citizen and a member of the Convention; in 1794 he emigrated to America, where he died. His discoveries in chemistry alone would suffice to make him famous. Besides numerous religious treatises, his writings include an *Essay on the First Principles of Government*, 1768; a *Disquisition Relating to Matter and Spirit*, 1777; and a reply to the *Reflections* of Burke on the French Revolution. He also left autobiographical memoirs. *Works*, ed. Rutt, 1831–2. See Thorpe, *Priestley*, 1906.—Richard Price, 1723–91, a Unitarian minister, published *A Review of the Principal Questions in Morals*, 1757; upheld the cause of the American colonies and of the French Revolution.

In the case of Reid, common sense is not synonymous with the superficial judgment of the man in the street, but represents, as it were, a fund of all the intuitional qualities inherent in the spirit and language of a reasoning humanity. To Hume's famous analysis, which destroyed the reality of the material world and dissolved it into a number of loose shifting illusions, Reid opposes a decided and bold negative. To him, the perception of what is external is really a direct apprehension, in which is expressed and revealed the unanalysable activity of the "I." This rehabilitation of the immediate mode of knowing prepared the way for the renascence of intuitive philosophy; in France, through Maine de Biran, Royer-Collard, Jouffroy and Cousin, it strengthened the current of spiritualism which finally led to the work of Renouvier and Bergson. In Scotland and in England, the great success of the eloquent professor, Dugald Stewart, upholds the prestige of an orthodox idealism against the defenders of a utilitarian rationalism. According to the Scottish theory, the simple "ideas" with which Locke and Hume tried in vain to reconstruct the world are little else than an arbitrary and artificial product of the intelligence, whereas the stuff of actual experience is at once organic and complex. It is a view which has been taken up again and developed by modern psychology.

The same tendencies are in evidence with the moralists and the theologians; all their research is dominated by a general spirit of strict reasoning, handed down from an age when a mathematical certainty was the haunting ideal of those who tried to reduce the soul to a system. Still, their argument is deflected in various ways—a fact of which they may or may not have been aware—by certain extraneous preoccupations of conduct, or by a sense of the requirements of the heart. Perhaps it is even the unestablished, absolute force of some mystical belief which, like a secret inner light, directs their efforts. Abraham Tucker[2] is a type of those thinkers often met with in England, whose untrained faculties possess a natural vigour, though they are as incapable of methodical reasoning as of a systematic explanation of their ideas. He exemplifies in a very suggestive way the obscure conflict that is being waged in the spiritual mind of his epoch—the struggle between the need to understand and that which calls for a belief without definite proofs. Paley, in other respects, is no less significant a figure; he had a greater circle of readers, and thus materially influenced the religious beliefs not only of his own generation but of several, by bringing to the cult of religion a sense of certitude that was at once rational and unassailable. Paley's well-trained thinking achieves a logical order; his doctrine, however, lacks originality, for he reproduces that of Butler in a more superficial plane, by tracing the existence of God to the many signs of an organisation in the things around us; while his theory of virtue serves to emphasise and formulate the instinctive utilitarian tendencies of the average religious conscience.

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[1] For Campbell, see below, sect. 3.—For Beattie, see below, chap. vii.—James Oswald: *An Appeal to Common Sense in Behalf of Religion*, 1766–72.—Thomas Reid (1710–96), Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Glasgow: *An Inquiry into the Human Mind*, 1764; *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*, 1785; *Essays on the Active Powers of Man*, 1788. *Works*, ed. Hamilton and Mansel, 1863. See Fraser, *Reid*, 1898.—Dugald Stewart (1753–1828), Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh, the disciple and continuator of Reid: *The Philosophy of the Human Mind*, 1792–1827; *Philosophical Essays*, 1810; *The Active and Moral Powers of Man*, 1828. *Works*, ed. Hamilton, 1854–58.

[2] Abraham Tucker (1705–74), a country squire: *The Light of Nature Pursued*, 1765–74.—William Paley (1743–1805), the most popular of the English theologians in the early nineteenth century: *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, 1785; *Horæ Paulinæ*, 1790; *View of the Evidences of Christianity*, 1794; *Natural Theology*, 1804. *Works*, 1825.

And, as a matter of fact, during the whole of this period there is a general trend in questions of morality towards utilitarianism. Already before the close of the century, Bentham comes to the fore as the leader of a group of philosophers who will thoroughly develop the consequences of this cult of the useful; but in order to follow the progress of their doctrine we must turn to the years after 1800, that is to say, to the next era, to which this group really belongs.[1] The keen desire to get at the basic principles governing conduct is very much in evidence with the contemporaries of Hume. The great sceptic himself had admitted that the feeling of sympathy which he held to be a primordial fact of conscious experience, directly gave rise to approbation or blame for the actions of others, and that from such a germ all the duties of man could spring; while he further defined this feeling of fellowship as a natural effusion of the human soul, a kind of friendly benevolence free from any ulterior motive. Yet the exercise of such a feeling was accompanied by a certain amount of pleasure, and thus the doctrine of utilitarianism was never quite lost sight of. Adam Smith[2] frames a code of morals on the same principle. He denies the existence of a particular and mysterious "sense," which Shaftesbury and Hutcheson claimed to exist; sympathy, according to him, is the motive force of all ethical judgment; but in order to be efficacious, it requires to be enlightened and controlled, and so can no longer be distinguished from the reflective reaction of conscience. In this way it appeared that morality was essentially a fact of social import, the outcome of men's relations with one another. The economic laws governing such relations were later to become the study of Adam Smith, who in this new sphere of thought tended rather to stress the importance of what he deemed to be a necessary egoism.

3. **Æsthetics and Criticism.**—The mind of the eighteenth century, attracted by the idea of general laws, and no longer differentiating between spiritual matters and physical nature, tries to reduce Art not only to a system of rules but to what it believes are explanatory formulæ. After the effort of Classicism, which evolved categories and precepts for beauty and taste, there opens a period of still greater ambition, when the science of æsthetics appears, and literary criticism becomes a philosophy.

This movement in thought is connected with the quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns, which had quieted down, so to speak, but did not wholly disappear with the age of Temple and Swift; in a more definite way, the origin of the new tendency was in the tentative efforts which were made after 1750 by the renascence of the national spirit, to uphold the rights of originality as against the doctrine of mere imitation. The innovators are naturally desirous of justifying their doctrine; and even writers whose work to all intents and purposes is orthodox and traditional, allow themselves to be influenced as far as seeking to destroy the basic principles of orthodoxy. One of the most remarkable aspects of the trend of ideas during the century is this critical liberty which defines and suggests beforehand all the bold departures of the Romantic spirit, just as the progress of sentiment and imagination brings out all the mental elements of Romanticism; while the literature, as if bewitched, remains passively submissive to established forms of verbal expression, and lacks the courage to develop its own freedom. The theory of Beauty in art, as in literature, frees itself from the dogma of Classicism long before the actual appearance of the works in which this independence is definitively illustrated.

As early as 1753, the painter Hogarth[3] champions the cause of the sinuous line as against the straight, denies that any good can come from pure imitation in art, and thus instils a new life into the classical principle of fidelity to nature, by extending its scope to that of an original endeavour. Joseph Warton's *Essay on Pope* and Young's *Conjectures*[1] in their turn define the qualities of creative genius, uphold the rights of individuality, and place it above the mere observance of rules.

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[1] See Book V. chap. iii.

[2] See below, sect. 3. *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 1759.

[3] *The Analysis of Beauty, written with a View of Fixing the Fluctuating Ideas of Taste.*

The *Inquiry* of Burke[2] at the same time voices the need for analysis, then gives vent to the urgent desire among intellectuals for a well-defined systematisation in æsthetic matters, and lastly illustrates the dominant tendencies which are directing thought, quite unconsciously, towards the theory of liberty in art. Burke protests against the old-time custom of looking for the rules of the Beautiful in works that have realised it; only nature is the source from which fresh beauty can spring. Moreover, when he closely connects the sublime with terror, and shows the influence of the unseen and the mysterious in the production of fear, he outlines, as it were, beforehand the range and scope of the novel of terror. He dimly foresees that emotion can be explained by a physiological theory, and the light he throws upon the relation of the human organism to the impression of beauty explains and justifies the rôle that Romanticism will soon give to the strong stimulation of the senses, and to suggestion as a general force in art. He himself indicates very precisely the way in which poetry influences the sensibility of a reader; it is a contagious action, in which the value of words is measured by their own tonality, and by the emotional energy which they have received from the impassioned soul of the poet. The suggestive force of words lies in their power of radiating an appeal to the senses and to imagination, and not in their quality of mere intellectual symbols. It is on this very principle that Wordsworth will build up his theory of poetic diction.

Several years later, Lord Kames[3] abandons the notion that literary criticism is founded upon authority, and maintains that rules are derived from the inner laws governing human nature. He also directs æsthetic thought in England, right from its beginnings, towards the sphere of psychology and even of physiology. But in order to fully appreciate the progress accomplished since the age of Pope—a progress which has been steadily taking place, and which at the same time has never severed its allegiance to the past—we must turn to the work of Blair,[4] whose *Belles-Lettres* form the taste of a whole generation. This critic has still a little of the narrow-mindedness of his time, as can be seen from his somewhat formal ideas on rhetoric and on a correct style; but his pages reveal a secret sympathy with the sentimental moralising atmosphere around him; a dim sense of intuition seems to give breadth and freshness to his perceptive faculties, as well as to his maxims. All his conscious effort is directed against artifice, and towards what is to him simplicity. Although reason is still indispensable with Blair, it performs only a secondary part; all artistic effects are derived from imagination and feeling. Sublimity resides in the essence of vigorous conciseness; it submits with difficulty to terminal rhymes, but finds its full expression in the liberty of blank verse. It has its being in the thought, not in the words, so that every writer who attempts to reach the sublime by mere intensity of expression is in error. Prosody is not necessary to the poet; there are forms of prose more genuinely poetical than verse itself, as, for example, that of Ossian; poetry is, above all, the language of passion, of imaginative ardour, whether it be expressed in lines of regular rhythmic flow, or otherwise.

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[1] 1756 and 1759; see above, Book IV. chap. i. sect. 4.

[2] *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, 1756.

[3] *The Elements of Criticism*, 1762, by Henry Home, Lord Kames (1696–1782).

[4] *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres* (1783), by Hugh Blair, Professor of Literature in the University of Edinburgh (1718–1800).

The painter Reynolds,[1] however, with elegance and not without intellectual force, enunciated the laws of the beautiful from the point of view of plastic art. His doctrine has all the rigour of a severe Classicism. It affirms the existence of a system of laws, outside of which the artist can create nothing that is lasting; it preaches the necessity for strenuous effort and fidelity to the object itself. But if the respect for nature is the first care of the artist, then his active mind will build up from actual forms an abstract idea of the ideal in beauty, and this, in turn, will guide him in his search after the sublime. Compared with this great art, the realism of Hogarth, Teniers, Watteau and Claude le Lorrain is on an inferior level. The value of a work is measured by the corresponding worth of the mental energy which has gone to produce it, or which it has called into play. A painter of noble ambition shall seek his subjects in history or in the fable; he shall choose them for their human and universal interest. He shall always be an imitator; genius itself is the offspring of imitation. Drawing is the language proper to painting; the colour must remain before all simple and sober; it shall be subservient to the idea. The truthfulness shown in local or particular delineation shall be sacrificed in favour of the general element, of that unchanging, everlasting quality which belongs exclusively to reason. It is therefore evident that the doctrine of Reynolds is, and chiefly aims at being, classical. At the same time, in practice his brush reveals an indebtedness to the colourists of the Venetian School, and the happy originality of his artistic temperament.

4. Political Economy: Adam Smith.—The beginnings[2] of Political Economy in England can be traced further back than the works of Adam Smith. At the same time it must not be forgotten that he was in touch with the French School of Physiocrats, who contributed in moulding his thought. But even after the lapse of a century and a half, he is still by the most solid of claims the first master of this science, which in its modern and liberal form has exercised an acknowledged influence over minds and actions alike.[3]

With Adam Smith, economy already represents a developed system; he makes a comprehensive survey of a vast field, marking it out into separate parts, and laying down the great lines of research which so many others have followed in his train. His thought has an inner coherence, which enables him to organise with vigour all the vast store of ideas at his command. But his doctrine has not as yet acquired the excessively deductive, inflexible and almost geometrical form which certain of his disciples will later give it. A gifted master in the realms of abstract thought, he never loses touch, however, with reality, and if at times he fails to appreciate all the aspects of certain facts, his powers of perception are none the less subtle and delicately tempered. His intellectual horizon is that of a very careful observer, who not only is able to penetrate the elementary psychological motives governing men, but can also appreciate the force of the relations between social factors, which underlie every possible equilibrium.

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[1] Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–92); *Fifteen Discourses delivered in the Royal Academy*, 1769–90; ed. Gosse, 1884.

[2] In the works of Hobbes, Locke, Mandeville, Joshua Child, William Petty, Hume and Sir James Stewart.

[3] Adam Smith, born at Kirkcaldy in 1723, of middle-class family; studied at Oxford; renounced a Church career for that of literature; Professor of Logic, then of Moral Philosophy, in the University of Glasgow, he published his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 1759; travelled on the Continent, and in Paris came into contact with Quesnay, Turgot and Necker. He wrote, in studious seclusion, his *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, 1776; was given a lucrative post in Edinburgh, and died in 1790, leaving in manuscript form his *Essays on Philosophical Subjects*, 1795. *Wealth of Nations*, ed. MacCulloch, 1828; ed. Cannan, 1904. See John Rae, *Life of Adam Smith*, 1895; Hirst, *Adam Smith* (English Men of Letters), 1904; Haldane, *Adam Smith* (Great Writers), 1887.

Without analyzing too carefully the inherent prejudices of the new bourgeoisie, Adam Smith finds himself agreeing with their various needs and preferences; indeed, to such an extent, that he becomes the apostle of their individualism. But, although he may be said to voice in his work the instincts of a class, he nevertheless preserves the relative freedom of a broad mind, as well as a nobility of character. The agricultural type of country gentleman attracts him to the same degree as the class whose sole concern is commerce and industry; in the latter he discovers a trend, in some respects, opposed to national interests. He demonstrates the fruitfulness of egoism, but in a way that evidences a cordiality of spirit, a gentleness of feeling and an optimistic sensibility, which recall the temper so characteristic of the closing years of the eighteenth century. Upon the subjects of social evil and poverty he touches all too briefly, and in a way that suggests more an intellectual notion than a concrete sense. Similarly, he accepts too easily the inevitable working of economic laws, and these are the only points where is yet revealed a tendency to hard dogmatic assertion, which will rob the new science of part of its truth, as well as limit the human possibilities of its influence.

The substance of the work is concrete, made up of shrewd and exact analyses. Notions and formulæ which answer to typical cases, and whose scope is only absolute in theory, while in reality they do not hold good outside certain historical complexes, are grasped, disentangled with an unpretentious but sure method. Value, according to the writer, is based on labour; and the division of labour multiplies its productive force; the various classes—landowners, capitalists, manual workers—harmonise their activities in the productive cycle, and severally receive the rewards accruing to each from the pursuit of their interests in a spirit of enlightened selfishness; the welfare of the community springs harmoniously, providentially one might say, from the egoism of the individual. Now the progress of wealth in society at large means a change from an agricultural age to a commercial era; and this, in turn, introduces the legitimate demand for a complete independence. The State, deriving its powers from the delegation of individuals, and finding in taxes the sanction of its rights, is no longer performing its duties when once it claims to direct or even supervise the natural interplay of the forces and desires in conflict. The prosperity of Europe is bound up with an economic emancipation, which will destroy all that remains of a tyrannical system of rules, or all that might threaten to renew it. The orthodox teaching of Ricardo on the one hand, the socialism of Marx on the other, are latent within that doctrine, uniting as it does with its optimism what might be termed the fatalism of liberty.

Adam Smith is a cultivated writer, attentive to form, and animated by an artistic sense of order and elegance. However dull or dry the subject may be, he has been able to make it both living and perspicuous, because he is possessed of a clearness of mental vision, and can infuse a quickening force into all he touches. The tenor of his style is made of ample, though not excessively long sentences, connecting the qualifications and illustrations directly with the main idea. The general flow of his prose is simple, natural and easy.[1]

5. The Historians: Gibbon.—While history, as a distinct literary kind, began in England only during the eighteenth century, its progress, once started, was very rapid. The same generation which witnessed the efforts of Hume and Robertson now sees them continued and surpassed by Gibbon.[2]

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[1] Arthur Young (1741–1820), the author of numerous treatises on English agriculture, is chiefly known for his works on economy, and the accounts of his travels and researches; *Political Arithmetic*, 1774; *Tour in Ireland*, 1780; *Travels in France*, 1792.

[2] Edward Gibbon, born in 1737, came of an upper middle-class family; he was for some time at Oxford, but owed his precocious erudition to a zealous love of study. In 1753 he

His work has better stood the test of time. It represents an immensity of task and an erudition that are admirable, a critical sense of values sane and naturally delicate. Gibbon is a seeker after truth, a writer who never forgets the complex nature of his quest, who is careful over the precise shade of meaning he wishes to convey, and whose every affirmation is coloured with prudence. He has exhausted every source of information then known, whether ancient or modern. And even if a broader and deeper science has since renovated the matter of his pages, transforming many of his perspectives and correcting occasional errors, yet the main lines of his pictures are still acceptable; and the spirit of conscientiousness which he brought to his task keeps its worth, despite the even more scrupulous efforts of modern historians.

His ideal, however, is not one of mere historical accuracy. He feels that he can exercise to a great extent his individual choice, as to the method of arranging his subject-matter. He aims at a synthesis, at a connected and clear relation of facts. In the organisation of his materials he shows the boldness of a master mind, building up an edifice of prose, the architectural idea of which is the cult of the beautiful. Exactitude and objectivity are thus combined with art in a thousand ways, and of necessity suffer from the compromise; but on the other hand they are raised to a superior plane of consistency, which they owe to the unity of one presiding thought and vision.

Gibbon's thought is philosophical, and his vision is that of a poet; but the great effort of his intellectual power is concentrated in the desire to understand. He instinctively looks for the developments and changes of things. He can appreciate the value of institutions, of public life, of customs and habits, even if he fails to recognise the full importance of these social elements. The decline and the fall of ancient Rome are bound up with political happenings, which, in turn, are inseparable from moral causes. And it is such causes that Gibbon sets out to unravel, with a penetrating discrimination which suggests the method and example of Montesquieu. In other respects also he is much indebted to France, to the learning of a Tillemont, as to the elegant lucidity of the French political writers.

Viewing thus at one glance the history of the long transition which saw the development of Europe from its ancient order to the birth of a new civilisation, his judgment discerns only a natural series of connected facts. His point of view is that of the modern scientist. During the years which witness the decadence of Rome, Christianity in its rise and progress is a moral and political growth that spreads across the paths of decay; so that between a decadent state on the one hand and the new cult on the other, there exists an obscure and intricate relationship, as to which religion and the Church have built up a positive doctrine. Gibbon, however, sees that interrelation in quite a different light; and as, while he thinks with complete freedom, he does not feel that he can speak freely, he adopts towards the orthodox thesis an attitude of cold defer-

was converted to Roman Catholicism, but returned to Protestantism under the influence of a Swiss pastor with whom he resided at Lausanne. From 1758 to 1762 he was employed on military work; in 1761 he published in French his *Essai sur l'étude de la Littérature*. Three years later, while on a visit to Rome, he conceived the idea of relating the fall of the Roman Empire, a work at which he laboured when settled in London and during the years of his Parliamentary career. The first volume of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* appeared in 1776, and was received very favourably, but the author's attitude to early Christianity brought forth a whole series of protests and lively controversies. After the second and third volumes (1781), Gibbon retired to Lausanne, and completed his task with the fourth volume in 1788. He enjoyed the friendship of the Neckers, at that time in exile at Coppet, and died in 1794. His journals and memoirs, part of which he wrote in French, remain unpublished. Several of his autobiographical notes were collected in a condensed form or added to his letters, etc., by Lord Sheffield (*Miscellaneous Works of Gibbon*, 1814). *Letters*, ed. Prothero, 1896; *Memoirs*, ed. Hill, 1900. *Decline and Fall*, ed. Bury, 1909–13. See J. C. Morison, *Gibbon* (English Men of Letters), 1878; Sainte-Beuve, *Lundis*, vol. viii.

ence and discreet irony, which serves in a rather ineffective way to mask his aggressive scepticism. The organic connections which make the most opposite aspects of the evolution of mankind mutually dependent, are interpreted by a kind of positive realism; the mystical awakening of souls appears as another side of the general breaking up of intelligence; while the formation of the ecclesiastical order is hailed not only as an effect, but also as a cause of the ruin of the social order.

With an intrepid brush Gibbon sets out to alter all the accepted lights and shades in the traditional picture of these early centuries; the prestige of a benign and enlightened humanity sheds a soft glow over the heathen world as it sinks to its fall; the victory of Christianity, strong by reason of its intrinsic virtues and stronger still through its fanatical spirit, is hardly distinguishable from that of Barbarism. Without claiming the intervention of supernatural causes, historians of to-day attribute a very different part to the spiritual stimulus which the cult of Christianity brought with it, characterising it rather as a deep quickening of the conscience. It can therefore be understood why believers reproach Gibbon with a lack of sympathetic intuition.

In these chapters which reflect the mental outlook of a Voltaire, Gibbon's art deals often in the sober tints of implied meaning. Yet, despite such reticence and the method of insinuation, his work as a whole possesses a genuine vigour, moving forward with a clear and ample sweep, so broad and powerful that it has been compared with the movement of some great epic. Flashes of the romantic sense of historical origins at times enliven an evocation of the past which is essentially explanatory. He has no misgivings, no inward torment of thought; the play of pure intellect provides him with a serenity, just as the sole power of reason has moulded after its fashion a life of worthy and wise endeavour.

The style of Gibbon has acquired a well-deserved fame. More simple than that of Johnson, it is still not free from obvious elaboration, and from some oratorical solemnity. There is also a slightly artificial elegance, a too frequent use of antithesis, and a touch of rhetoric, which mark the language as that of the eighteenth century. But on the other hand, the verbal texture of the whole presents a perfect solidity, and is marred in no way by the polish which it has received. The plan of the work shows Gibbon to be a writer of the greatest constructive genius, and one of the sanest of logicians. At the same time he is a narrator, uniting the gifts of the novelist with those of the historian; he has welded such various elements into a book of clear and absorbing reading, whose interest is renewed and sustained with every page. Lastly, strong creative imagination bathes this monumental fresco in a light that is somewhat cold, but tranquil, and full of suggestion to the mental sight of the reader.

To be consulted: A. Blum, *Hogarth*, 1923; *Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. x. chaps. xiii. and xiv.; Saintsbury, *History of Criticism*, 1902; Seth, *English Philosophers and Schools of Philosophy*, 1912; Leslie Stephen, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, 1902; idem, *The English Utilitarians*, 1900; Thomas, *Le Poète Edward Young*, etc., 1901; Thorpe, *Priestley*, 1906.

CHAPTER V

THE CLASSICAL TEMPERAMENTS

1. **The Later Classicists and Independent Writers.**—If the historic age of Classicism does come to an end, Classicism itself never dies. As it represents in the life of literature one of the fundamental phases, associated with one of the essential aspects of artistic creation, it can disappear only to reappear, and never is entirely effaced. With many it preserves a dim and hidden existence; while it remains in its fullness as a clear and well-defined factor with some exceptional temperaments, which carry the spirit of one literary period into the next, thus both harking back to the past and giving a premonition of the future. Even in the heyday of Romanticism writers will be found who, belated in a way, will be precursors just as well.

From 1770 to 1800, however, it is fairly obvious that a certain phase in English literature is about to end. The artistic codes which for well-nigh a century have held the field are now becoming more and more inadequate; at the same time life itself is responsible for the creation of other codes, which are tentative to a great extent, but have a vitality which leaves little place for doubt. This contrast is to be seen especially in the verse of the period.

The poets of note during these thirty years form, as it were, two natural groups. The first consists of those who, more influenced by the new spirit, are already giving it a pronounced expression; certain even succeed in effecting to a large extent the necessary renovation of form; in the case of Blake, the outstanding poet of this first group, there is little to distinguish him from the Romantic generation who were to be his contemporaries for the latter part of his life. The second group are more strictly obedient to the traditional modes of inspiration and style; not that they are against any desire for change, or do not experience the need for innovation in poetry; but their very efforts are guided by the stereotyped codes which they have never dared to challenge, so that even when the vague tremors of a new-felt inspiration stir their souls, their poetry remains fettered to mechanical processes and passive adherence to custom. They show much less the promise of the future than the signs of a decadence; they are the last of the direct line of classical poets.

Lastly, the literary transition of the century is represented as well, whether in prose or in poetry, by some more vigorous personalities, with whom the dominance of Classicism is not a merely passive survival, but answers to the deliberate choice of a temperament. Here indeed one plainly seizes the deep-rooted continuation of a type of mind that will not disappear.

In the heart of the pre-Romantic period, at a time when the new literary tendencies are gaining ground on every side, these artists, showing their independence in their own way, react against the new spirit and follow the truth of their instinct. To the growing cult of the emotions, the bold flights of a released imagination, to the turbid, ambiguous, self-indulgent, and perhaps even insincere element in the fervid exaltation of souls, they respond by a mood of uneasy hostility. They keep as it were immune when all the literary atmosphere around them is charged with the contagious upsetting influence of the new ideas; they remain the supreme masters of themselves; and they react in the spirit of a malicious irony, and a realism that is either refined or bitter. The novels of Miss Burney and Jane Austen, and the poetical work of Crabbe, adhere to the main tradition of the eighteenth century; and at the same time they suggest that desire for balance which will be the keynote of a new age, after Romanticism has bloomed and faded in its turn.

2. The Poets.—A difficulty presents itself when poetry comes to be considered, towards the classification of the various moods that animate it. It cannot subsist on pure reason, and will at least tinge its intellectual themes with emotion. Therefore the oppositions between the general moods of writers are most often less clear-cut in poetry than in prose. The closing years of the eighteenth century offer a case in point. The mingling, in unequal proportions, of the new sentimentalism and of all the abstract ideas handed down from the age of reason, tends to lessen the gap that separates the poets of the two groups, and at times would seem even to unite them. There is no set line of demarcation. Still, when averages are considered, the inner opposition comes out with unmistakable clearness. The didactic and essentially intellectual inspiration is preferably associated with the passive acceptance of pseudo-classical rules; on the contrary, it is by virtue of their strong passion, and their neglect of the petty niceties of form, that the great poets of the pre-Romantic period rise above an art already out of date.

The individual temperaments, however, preserve their duality of character with all its complexity. Even as Erasmus Darwin,[1] the typical example of this decadent literature, belongs indeed to a time when the average mind likes the softening influence of some pleasing, soothing emotion. To him as to the immediate disciples of Pope, poetry represents a game of skill; but the ingenuity therein displayed has now become less drily intellectual, and tends more and more towards an affected, didactic sentiment. The superficial nature of the emotion is revealed by the cold indifference which can permit a striving after mere verbal effects, a patchwork of epithets, the preciosity of an amorous botanist; which again mingles personified abstractions, unending allegories, all the stereotyped resources and the descriptive artist, with some touches of sincere realism, and with the thoughts of a noble mind. For while the intellect plays a very active part in the life of Erasmus Darwin—to say nothing of his remarkable intuitional gifts—his sensibility is not altogether false. If his poetry is largely artificial, it is because his inspiration is crushed under the tricks and conventions, the metaphors and elegant turns, the queer system of plant mythology, which weigh it down like some overwhelming burden.

This lack of inventive spontaneity is reflected in the inertia of the prosodic instinct, with the result that the inevitable measure employed is, as one would expect, the rhymed couplet—the essence of cadenced regularity. The monotony of the rhythm, and the tedious observance of the pauses in each line, are perhaps the surest proof of the paralysing impotence which lies hidden at the root of an effort, estimable in itself, to renovate poetry through an imaginative interpretation of science.

The same manner in tone and style, a confused mixture of the traditional fashions in language with the new fashion of feeling, merged into one common passiveness of taste, characterises the writers of this group. When, as in the work of "Peter Pindar,"[2] there is an attempt to revive satire, it is no less prosaic than it is vulgarly forcible. With him a spirit of mockery excludes any attempt at sentiment, while a reminiscence of the orthodox ode results in a laboured variety of rhythms; but the result has all the barrenness of a degenerate Classicism, and nothing that would suggest the inspiring force of the true classical spirit.[1] In Robert Bloomfield's work,[2] a racy strength, a temperament that savours of the people, are warped and weakened through the medium of an acquired style, a studied elegance, a commonplace regularity. Even Campbell,[3] whose mature years coincide with all the great period of Romanticism, bears for life the imprint of the unconscious ideal of correctness, abstract sublimity, and verbal felicity, which he has received from Pope or his disciples, and which his first poem does realise. His patriotic fragments, with their rousing intensity of appeal, some interesting attempts, and here and there the scattered accents of unsustained vigour, do not efface from his work the impression of an unfulfilled destiny, thwarted, might one say, by the moral anachronism of a wavering inspiration. He is remembered by several short poems, in which the sincerity of feeling restrains and simplifies the form.

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[1] The grandfather of Charles Darwin; born in 1731, died in 1802; *The Botanic Garden:* Part I., *The Economy of Vegetation;* Part II., *The Loves of the Plants,* 1789–91; *The Temple of Nature, or the Origin of Society,* 1803. In prose: *Zoönomia, or the Laws of Organic Life,* 1794–96; *Phytologia, or the Philosophy of Agriculture,* 1800. See C. Darwin, *Life of Erasmus Darwin,* 1887; S. Butler, *Evolution Old and New,* 1879; Brandl (Schipper's *Wiener Beiträge,* vol. xxx.), 1909.

[2] John Wolcot (1738–1819), whose pseudonym was "Peter Pindar," wrote numerous parodies and satires on his contemporaries.

3. The Novel: Miss Burney, Jane Austen.—Having started in the period which stretches from 1770 to 1800, the literary careers of Miss Burney, Jane Austen, and the poet Crabbe continued well into the decisive years of the Romantic era. But their work, if judged by its essential features, shows the stamp of the years preceding this age. To the characteristic traits of the new literature which, we have seen, were in evidence long before 1800, the reaction of these writers is hostility or reserve. Their artistic impulses swing back to motives, themes and forms which make them much rather the heirs of the classical tradition in its essence; and their temperaments, to the very end, bear the deep mark of that early choice. Their mental outlook remains that of the close of the eighteenth century.

Of the three, Miss Burney[4] is the least remote from the first flush of sentimentalism in England; she remains, more than not, a sentimentalist herself. Richardson she hails as a master; in *Evelina* she takes from him the idea of a novel in letters, a tone of conscious moralising, the study of virtue among women as a subject for a plot—a study which remains with her discreet and unobtrusive; and the setting up of a strong contrast between the good and the wicked. From the atmosphere of her own day she acquires the habit of the ever-ready tear, and the lavish display of feeling. But if such traits tend to stamp her as one of a school of writers, she has others which single out her talent as one of the most original. The spontaneous vivacity of her verve, the fresh new touch she brings to all her observation of customs and manners, and behind her brilliant gift that clear judgment, readily ironical, of a young person in full control of herself, all make her an exponent of satire and realism, in which her innermost nature seems to have dwelt and had its being.

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[1] Christopher Anstey (1724–1805), an author whose *New Bath Guide* (1766) was very popular in the eighteenth century, had at least an instinctive perception of the familiar freedom which a comic and satirical inspiration demands. His verse, which often lapses into doggerel, has a certain spontaneous ease in its flow. This liberation from the strict rules of prosody by means of a good-natured simplicity is, as it were, a dim intuition of one of the ways along which the coming rejuvenation of poetry will be accomplished.

[2] Robert Bloomfield (1766–1823): *The Farmer's Boy*, 1800; *Rural Tales*, 1802, etc.

[3] Thomas Campbell (1774–1844): *The Pleasures of Hope*, 1799; *Gertrude of Wyoming*, 1809, etc. *Poetical Works*, ed. Robertson, 1907. See the Study of Hadden (Famous Scots Series), 1899.

[4] Frances (or more familiarly, Fanny), the second daughter of Doctor Burney, a musician of note, was born in 1753 and introduced at an early age into the fashionable society of London. Her novel, written in secret, *Evelina, or a Young Lady's Entrance into the World*, 1778, had a great success; she acknowledged the authorship and in 1782 published *Cecilia, or Memoirs of an Heiress*. Attached to the court as one of the queen's maids of honour from 1786 to 1791, she married in that year General d'Arblay, a French emigrant, and resided in Paris from 1802 to 1812. After the publication of her last two novels—*Camille*, 1796; *The Wanderer*, 1814—she wrote a Life of her father (1832), and died in 1840. Her *Diary* and *Letters* were published by her niece (1842–46). *Evelina; Diary*, ed. Dobson. 1904. See Dobson, *Fanny Burney*, 1903.

Fashionable society has always delighted in its own reflected image; but never before had it seen itself through the eyes of a young girl of so arch a temperament and so shrewd a nature, who could penetrate from the feminine point of view the weak points of drawing-room life, and in the most delightful manner completely reverse the picture of it as painted by writers of the opposite sex; yet who was able at the same time to flatter the taste of her readers by showing a sincere respect for rank and worldly conventions. There is, to use a phrase not yet then in vogue, a certain snobbery in her work; but it is a quality which enables her more readily to seize in its very essence the superficial, brilliant and frivolous life she describes; and her description is pleasing, because she has the gift of a witty and animated style. She often shows up the little whims of people with no excess of indulgence; and in some of the figures she has drawn with a rather too pronounced touch of comedy we are reminded of Smollett. In other cases, we will think of Fielding, or even of Sterne. The author of *Evelina* had a precocious and assimilative talent. But Miss Burney does retain a personality, a charm peculiarly her own, a gift of greater precision in her pen pictures of Society than anyone before her; a rendering of conversation more light, more rapid and more true. Never before had the real atmosphere of social gatherings and pleasure haunts, with all their gossip, nor the feverish excitement of those momentous days which open with the heroine's entry into society and close with her marriage, been described so successfully. Here is a picture of the aristocracy of the time with its sense of refinement in contrast to its relative lack of delicacy; it must be admitted that Miss Burney herself sometimes shows a slightly blunt taste in the way she upbraids the vulgarity of the middle classes. And this first tentative revelation of the feminine self in the novel, if we leave aside the bold freedom of a Mrs. Behn or a Mrs. Manley, does not conceal that inner ardour of imagination which will often develop in a life whose interests are all bound up in love.

And still, what predominates is common sense, coloured to some extent by the spirit of dry calculation. The term "Romantic" is hardly ever used except ironically. The pictures of happiness held out are such as a social world will allow in which wealth, birth and health are yet the almost indispensable conditions of any success. The second novel of Miss Burney, *Cecilia*, with greater care in the writing, has less of the fresh liveliness of the first; it is yet more closely obedient to the fashions in vogue, whether literary or intellectual. The *Memoirs* of Madame d'Arblay shows us a woman of sufficient talent and feeling to take in the various interests and picturesque aspects of the social life which surrounds her, and whose image she has preserved; but entirely unable to rise above them.

Those traits reappear in the work of Jane Austen[1] but further developed and chiefly much refined. By virtue of a stronger personality and a keener sense of delicacy in art, she is a writer of the first rank.

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[1] Jane, youngest daughter of George Austen, a country parson, was born in Hampshire (1775), received a careful education, and led an uneventful, home-keeping life amid the quiet provincial surroundings of the South. She began to write at an early age, and three of her novels were already completed before the end of the century, but they did not appear in print until a later date: *Sense and Sensibility* in 1811, *Pride and Prejudice* in 1813, *Mansfield Park* in 1814. *Emma* appeared in 1816; *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* after her death in 1817. A fragment (*Love and Freindship*) was published in 1922. There are several cheap editions of the novels (see Everyman's Library, etc.; ed. R. W. Chapman, 1923); the *Letters* were published in 1884. See W. and R. A. Austen-Leigh, *Jane Austen, Her Life and Letters*, 1913; the studies by Goldwin Smith (Great Writers), 1890; Helm, 1909; P. Fitzgerald, 1912; Cornish (English Men of Letters), 1913; Kate and Paul Rague (*Jane Austen*), 1914; Léonie Villard (*Jane Austen*), 1914.

Miss Burney had connected the whole fate of her characters with the central crisis in the life of woman, when the possibility of marriage lies directly in her path, and thus had created what may be termed the domestic novel.[1] In the hands of Jane Austen the subject is thoroughly sifted, and more strictly reduced to essentials; all the worldliness over which the authoress of *Evelina* loves to linger is unknown to her or is omitted, because the circle of her experience is more narrow, or indeed purely intimate. Her novels rarely treat of anything save the restricted circle of home life, and all social interests are gathered round it. The atmosphere is one of provincial calm with a very limited outlook, where the extremes of wealth and poverty are unknown. In this little world of country gentry, clergymen and middle-class people, social intercourse is smooth and simple; few are the incidents which could be called dramatic; so that an observer's attention may concentrate on shades of character. The realism of Jane Austen is more truly psychological than that of Richardson, for it is free from the tragic obsessions of moral conscience. With its greater freedom, it acquires a greater purity. There is an extraordinary degree of truth in the picture it paints of reality—of a group of human beings, their relations one with another, their clashes and affinities, their mutual influences, their conversations.

And this gift is explained by the immediate intuition she brings to her study of character, an intuition so natural and supple that it appears absolutely simple. Her clear-sighted eyes read through the inner minds of those who live around her, or of the beings whom she invents and animates, just as if those minds were transparent. She seizes them in their depths, although at first we do not get this impression, nor does she claim to give it. Only by a slight tremor in her style, whose even course is like that of some transparent stream, are we made aware of the tension, the nervous vigour, the effort put forth by her thought to comprehend and surmount the unseen obstacles that bar its progress. And everything dissolves into light. The secret complexities of self-love, the many vanities, the imperceptible quiverings of selfishness, all that a Rochefoucauld had shown up in the strong and bitter note of straightforward denunciation, and which at a later date the pessimistic novel will dissect with such profuseness and intensity of method, is here indicated or suggested so calmly and with so sober a touch that the author's personal reaction is reduced to a minimum. There is nothing more objective than those stories with their spirit of gentle tolerance, one might even say their naïvety, if a subtle suggestion of irony did not hover over every page, revealing a sharpness of vision that could be unmercifully severe.

The sentimentality of Miss Burney is entirely absent. Everything shows a delicacy of touch, a sense of balance, a serene reasonableness. All Jane Austen's work is transfused with the spirit of Classicism in its highest form, in its most essential quality: a safe, orderly harmony among the powers of the mind, a harmony where of necessity the intellect is paramount. So classical, so delicately shaded is that method, that we are strongly reminded of the art of the great French analysts. Jane Austen writes as one who is entirely ignorant of the growing force of Romanticism, which already has spread its power around her; or rather she holds herself aloof, meeting its fascination with ironical immunity. One of her first novels, *Northanger Abbey,* is a most penetrating criticism of the self-deception practised by those whose souls are intoxicated with the spell of artificial fear. The morbid cult of an emotion that is too readily excited to be genuine is linked up on the one hand with literary conventions, which supply it with its resources; on the other, with a deranged condition of mind and conduct, of which it is directly the cause; and nothing could improve on the neatness of the dissection. Her attitude towards Romanticism was to grow less critical with the progress of time. In *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion* there is a warming of the thought, a greater tenderness of feeling, and an easier reconciliation with the tone of the epoch. She allows it to be seen here that she is not in complete agreement with the hierarchy of social order. But to the end her vision of life remains primarily clear, though not dry. The power of facts, and the material conditions of happiness, are accepted with a simplicity far removed from the slightest hint of revolt; while the moral teaching embodies a wisdom free from all illusions, the fruit of a perfectly healthy heart and mind.

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[1] The theme had already been adumbrated in the *Pamela* of Richardson and the *Amelia* of Fielding.

That exquisite analysis is no enemy to creative power; Jane Austen's work shows us a wealth of character studies. They are not all equally good, those of women being at once more searching and more lifelike than those of men. But if she has reconstructed souls from the inside with the full and finished touch of the great masters, she has also the talent of picturesque evocation, and knows how to sketch figures with so sure and suggestive a pen that they stand out in a strong and unforgettable relief. Her power of perception is keen and fresh; she immediately grasps the individual traits, and so the odd as well, and at least potentially the comic. Her work represents in an original way the eternal comedy of life with all its whims and fancies; and as reality only awakens in her a spirit of amusement without bitterness, in which self-possession does not exclude a feeling of sympathy, just as her divination of character does not destroy the concrete sense of faces, gestures and acts, she allows the virtual quaintness of whatever is human to come out of itself, and to tell; and she abundantly possesses the implicit eloquence of humour.

Her range of effects is wonderfully varied, extending as it does from the piquant, youthful gaiety of *Pride and Prejudice,* where her art is almost perfect at the first attempt, to the mellow maturity of the last novels, in which it is perhaps less sure, less free from lengthy or weak passages, but is richer on the other hand in moral significance. But the literary personality behind it all retains throughout her work a unique charm, associated with a most sober distinction of technique and style.

4. **Realistic Poetry; Crabbe.**—The paradox included in the work of Crabbe[1] is that with him the same desire for truth, the same sympathy with the poor, which were going to be the source of the poetical reform of Wordsworth, should give a new lease of life to the classical tradition of form. His realism, proceeding as it does from the pent-up spirit of a moody pessimism, brings him into opposition with certain aspects of the literary conventions of his day; and what he thus rejects belongs in some measure to the past, in some to the future. From ancient times the pastoral poem, the idyll, and the bucolic style in verse had transmitted to one another an optimism which was imaginary and superficial; the signs of a return to reality, apparent in the poetry of Gay, Allan Ramsay and Thomson, had not altered the purely fictitious character of

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[1] George Crabbe, born in 1754 at Aldborough, on the east coast of England, in melancholy surroundings, came of a poor family. He practised medicine for some time, then took up literature, only to find discouragement and difficulties until Burke generously came to his assistance (1781). He took Orders, became chaplain to the Duke of Rutland, and then received several livings which placed him above need. His first important work, *The Library* (1781), enjoyed a fair success; *The Village* (1783) brought him fame. After a long silence, *The Parish Register* (1807), *The Borough* (1810), *Tales in Verse* (1812), *Tales of the Hall* (1819), while they kept his name before the public, did not add in any way to his reputation. He died in 1832. *Poems,* ed. Ward, 1907; *Poetical Works,* ed. Carlyle, 1908. See Ainger, *Crabbe* (English Men of Letters), 1903; Huchon, *Un poète réaliste anglais, George Crabbe,* 1906.

rustic themes. Then came sentimentalism, which added a new and alluring charm to all the former illusions. An interest was now taken in country life, people sought it with the somewhat hectic eagerness of the jaded town-dweller, and many pleasing tears were shed over the enjoyments and patriarchal rejoicings which Goldsmith had pictured up in his *Deserted Village*. What with the nymphs and amorous shepherds on the one hand, what with the sturdy jovial peasants on the other, it was everywhere images of happiness that met the eye. Against those fanciful dreams there surges in Crabbe a rebellious mood, made of experience. He was born, he grew up among humble folks; and whether they toiled in their fishing boats or ploughed a soil of little promise, their life to him was one series of bitter tasks beset by worries, poverty and illness, ending within the walls of the poorhouse; and the sight of their few brief joys saddened his heart no less than that of their griefs. So at the source of all his poetry there lie a protest of the moral conscience as of the instinct for truth, a feeling of pity, and a craving for intellectual justice; lastly, a bitterness from which the touch of a personal grievance is not absent.

With other natures, such motives will produce different results; as Crabbe's starting-point is not far removed from that of Wordsworth, it is not either from that of Dickens. But the pressure of a painful environment has weighed upon him too long; he has suffered too much, and the radiating heat of his heart has been quenched. He has no longer any hope; his sympathy with mankind has lost all its joy. Every page of his work bears the trace of a nature driven back upon itself, of feelings repressed, of thoughts ever brooding upon the merciless limitations which reality seems to be forcing upon the soul. And this vigorous concentration, in which there is both the principle of creative energy, and at the same time a trace of morbidness, is the innermost spring of his art; to it he owes the originality of his talent, and its weaknesses.

Classicism with Crabbe is a reaction, and recognises itself as such. His passion for truth gathers new strength from a spiteful contempt for dead literary illusions. He jeers at the fanciful novel and the tales of imaginary terror. Real misfortune is to him enough. He chooses to tell it with restraint. The regular, monotonous, closely woven rhythm of the heroic couplet is the appropriate setting for the mood of quiet and of simple strength which the poet feels, and which he upholds against all the enthusiasms, the studied effects, the false ornaments of an optimistic imagination. No other measure has shorter breath; it is the least pretentious as well, and on that very account the most sincere; it is prosaic, like life itself. The traditional language, the "poetic diction" of Pope and Gray, is a ready instrument of expression; it is natural, since it is generally accepted; to adopt it, therefore, is, in Crabbe's opinion, the surest way to avoid all the vanity of verbal pretensions. Thus it is that out of his very desire for simplicity and truth Crabbe is led instinctively to favour a conventional style; the craving he feels for novelty in matter finds no correlative in the field of form. His ear has no fastidious requirement; the artist in him demands no sensuous delights. Bent upon reality, humble of spirit, he writes in a language where all the débris of classical elegance, noble terms, generalities and abstractions, clothe the most concrete of subjects and themes.

For his poetry has an originality quite its own, and of the rarest flavour. The inspiration is new; it lights up so vividly the most familiar aspects of daily life, those which literature had least fondly dwelt upon, that it seems to reveal them for the first time. The village, the borough, their inhabitants, the stages in their fate, their labours, their temptations, their falls, and occasionally their virtues, are drawn for the first time with a minute, accurate brush. English country life at the end of the eighteenth century is thus depicted in its entirety, as seen by an observer whose resolute purpose is to alter in no particular the image of truth, were it even almost always a bitter truth.

The picture has the faithfulness, the scrupulous detail of Dutch painting; but it lacks the sensuous joy or the passion for sheer intensity of character that can instil a kind of happiness into the realism of the Flemish School. Here everything is dull and mournful, and one feels that if the artist has ended by loving that sadness, the edge of his suffering in it has not been blunted. For one thing, the descriptive talent of Crabbe, although always confined within the limits of immediate presentment, and never broadening into dreamy suggestiveness, or eking itself out through the complementary power of music, at least has an extraordinary power of evocation. Whatever he has seen, his eye retains and holds for ever; he shows it to us, perfectly, drily, in a colourless and cold light which awakes a few gleams on the surface of stagnant pools, but which idealises nothing. Moreover, in order thus to introduce into poetry a whole range of new sensations and images, the mind must submit to some stretching of its faculties; its very vocabulary has to seek the aid of terms still unpolished, untouched by literature. The realism of his method brings to Crabbe's style as to his art a salutary touch of vigour and novelty. Even the measure of his verse is not destitute of individual value; his couplet is no longer that of Pope, so brisk, so sparklingly neat; but his rhythm rather suggests a homely conversation, a kind of plodding, painstaking story, the very slowness of which permits of a deliberate statement of facts; and which finds a further resource in the "triplets."

An art which in *The Village* is clumsy, heavy, but already strong, singularly sure as to its main intent, and of unsurpassed robustness; ampler canvases, more brilliant hits, and a more unequal success, in *The Parish Register* and chiefly *The Borough;* a still imperfect composition, but the firmly stamped unity of tone, and a style in which rough, dense elements are welded together by means of energetic, simple methods—antithesis, repetition, alliteration: such is the talent of Crabbe in his best works. In the rest of his poetry he is weak, and tends to be verbose. Altogether, he keeps a place by himself in English literature. He is overshadowed neither by Wordsworth, who exalts realism and glorifies it through a touch of mysticism, nor by the novelists of social pity, who have given larger scope and livelier animation to his plea in favour of the poor. The truth of his pen pictures is harsh and incomplete, but within its own limits is unrivalled; his pathos is sombre, crushingly painful at times, but this only makes it more telling. The characteristics of his expression single him out as the last of the classical writers; but there is also in his poetry the suggestion of a virtual Romanticism that has been repressed, the play in conflict of a suffering sensibility, and of an imagination resolutely bent under the yoke of the real.[1]

To be consulted: *Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. x. chap. iii., vol. xi. chaps. vii. viii., vol. xii. chap. x.; Courthope, *History of English Poetry*, vol. vi.; O. Elton, *A Survey of English Literature*, 1780–1830, 1920; Huchon, *Crabbe*, 1906; Mrs. Oliphant, *Literary History of England in the End of the Eighteenth and Beginning of the Nineteenth Century*, 1882; L. Villard, *Jane Austen*, 1914.

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[1] The tendency to realism in the meticulous observation of nature is clearly seen in the pages of Gilbert White (1720–93), *The Natural History of Selborne* (1789); and in the description of rural life by John Langhorne (1735–79), *The Country Justice* (1774–77).

CHAPTER VI

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND ENGLISH LITERATURE

1. Acceptance and Rejection of the New Ideas.—The movement of ideas which paved the way for the French Revolution of 1789 can be traced in part to English influences. On the other hand, the French "philosophers" of the eighteenth century left their mark on England. Rousseau, in particular, had a spiritual following on the other side of the Channel.

Already, before the fall of the Bastille, there is evidence of a keener interest being taken throughout Europe in political and social problems, as though in anticipation of some coming decisive crisis. The outbreak of the Revolution is immediately felt through the neighbouring countries. From 1789 to 1815, the drift of European literature and thought is in certain respects determined in relation to France, whose stormy fate promotes amongst governments, nations and writers diverse reactions of sympathy, fear and hostility.

In the domains of political theory, philosophy and literature, England after 1730 is giving to France even more than she receives from it. But this proportion is reversed by the turmoil of the Revolution. Engrossed in its own affairs or propagating its ideas throughout Europe, Revolutionary and Imperial France is almost entirely absorbed in active interests, leaving to its political exiles, to a Madame de Staël or a de Villers, the opportunity of gathering the germs of foreign influence which the Romantic movement will stir into life. England, on the contrary, shaken as it is by the storm of events in France, and torn at first between a feverish admiration and a hatred mingled with terror, next almost completely united in the national struggle against Napoleon, is in a state of receptive susceptibility towards the contagious influence and example of France, whether she welcomes the new ideas, or violently opposes them, and through that opposition strengthens her consciousness of self. France is the pole of attraction or repulsion around which English intellectual life, in a large measure, tends to group itself during that period.

This relation to France, whether in a positive or in a negative sense, is of use in enabling us to classify individual minds, and to isolate a group of writers, not too artificially, during the first phase of the period. The oncoming of the French Revolution, its actual beginnings, and successive stages, are from about 1780 to 1800 the predominant factor in the mental outlook of political theorists, polemical writers, novelists, and even dramatists and poets. From about 1800, on the contrary, the moral and imaginative stir caused by the great upheaval enters into a new literature as one of its elements, and combines with the diverse impulses which give birth to English Romanticism in its definitive form. The influence of the Revolution after 1800 will be, therefore, part and parcel of the study of the full-grown Romantic movement.

On the whole, in the course of the first period, the revolutionary or counter-revolutionary fever is not connected in a simple way with the growth of Romanticism. It stimulates energies, calls forth individual temperaments, and gives each an added impetus in the direction which its own instincts were ready to take. Therefore this literature, from a psychological point of view, seems to possess very mixed characteristics. The partisans of the Revolution are, for the most part, generous enthusiasts, guided by sensibility and swayed by imagination; but the doctrine of abstract liberty and equality appeals to reason, to passionate logicians it is given to propagate it; and its intellectual rigour causes it to be denounced by its adversaries as an inhuman and chimerical kind of geometry. With the conservatives, one expects to find, and one actually does find, self-control and a cold bearing in matters intellectual; they are fond of irony; and their satires in verse are naturally cast in the classical mould. But their indignation is equally prone to find expression in tones of vehemence; and the greatest of them all, Burke, quickens the organic doctrine of traditional order through a powerful and intuitive imagination, set off by a language of fiery eloquence.

Revolutionary literature reflects the conflict in the minds of men. That conflict deeply stirs the soul of the time, and hastens the germination of the new art which is preparing. But this is a silent, an underground influence. It is after the keenest part of the struggle, in the quiet meditation of a relative lull, that the lasting and fruitful effect will be felt. Until then, the absorbing question which engrosses thought furnishes works of literature with their subject-matter, rather than it enters into the determination of their style; it is not yet a vital artistic influence. The great Revolutionary drama appeals to the whole of human nature, and calls all its rival faculties into play; it rouses souls to a pitch of enthusiasm, or tears them by an inner conflict; it is thus far from creating any psychological tone which one could describe as unified. And this is just what helps us to understand the very special moral quality of this epoch, in which the universal diffusion of sentiment associates it closely with every activity of the most clear-sighted and uncompromising reason.

2. The Revolutionaries: Politics, the Novel, and the Stage.—The Revolution, from the start, has adversaries who are opposed to it in principle, just as it can claim its supporters; Burke's indictment precedes the defensive arguments of Paine and Mackintosh. But, on the whole, the two attitudes adopted by English minds towards the events in France correspond to two successive phases, the second of which is that of hostility. Besides being the result of deeper and more mature reflection, the latter represents the instinctive opinion of the average mind, and is of a more lasting nature; so that the doctrine of Burke, brought into being as it is by momentary circumstances, has the ample scope of a national thesis, which for many years guided the trend of political thought.

The theorists of social utility who appealed to reason found themselves united for the defence of the abstract general principles which France had just proclaimed. A sermon by Price[1] had called forth the denunciations of Burke; Priestley[2] replied to these. Mackintosh[3] and Paine[4] championed the theme of liberty by consecrating their learning or zeal to its cause. Even to-day the treatise of Paine is not without interest. As a counter-weapon against the impassioned rhetoric of Burke, he discovers the efficacy of a vigorous style of popular appeal. Better than any polemical writer among his contemporaries, he represents the union of a fearless reasoning and critical mind, a mind almost French, with a perceptive sense which can appreciate the concrete nature of reality, according to the original English tradition.

But to Godwin[5] it was left to represent the extreme length to which intellectualism, in its application to social and moral problems, ever went in England. During those closing years of a century of reason, under the stress of the Revolutionary storm in France, the empiricism so deeply inherent in the normal English mind is rooted out of certain thinkers; leaving their thoughts to seek an equilibrium only in the coherence of principles, which can be deduced or brought into a system. Every tie, every limitation found in feelings, habits, prejudices, necessities of fact, are thus done away with; an all-powerful logic destroys the existing order in its minutest parts, and sets up an entirely new fabric in its place.

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[1] See above, chap. iv. sect. 2. *Discourse on the Love of Our Country*, 1789.

[2] See idem. *Letters to Mr. Burke*, 1791.

[3] Sir James Mackintosh (1765–1832): *Vindiciae Gallicae*, 1791.

[4] Thomas Paine (1737–1809), a Quaker by birth, was a strong supporter of the cause of the American revolutionaries (1776–83); then warmly upheld the French Revolution (*The Rights of Man*, 1791–92); opposed both Christianity and Atheism (*The Age of Reason*, 1794–95), and died in America. *Works*, ed. Conway, 1895–96; *Life*, by Conway, 1892. *Age of Reason* republished in 1916.

[5] William Godwin (1756–1836) was the son of a dissenting minister; had already

The intellectual search for truth and justice can alone give those ideal notions a precise outline. Justice and truth will be the work of a race guided by reason, a race which a well-planned system of education would from now onwards produce. Character can be moulded with a perfect sureness of touch, and the doctrine of determinism opens out before the eyes of mankind unlimited prospects of moral progress. Freed from the trammels of all emotional influence, each mind will find its own guiding standards in logical deduction. It will no longer be swayed by the illusions of feeling, but will be led by pure intelligence, which in every instance will reveal to it the highest goal of action, the common good. Such should be the one great aim of the legislator; and a society founded upon reason will enjoy the full rights of equality and liberty. The existing distribution of wealth, the established forms of government, the traditional modes of living, even marriage itself, will be revised and remodelled according to those principles; and every constraint exercised upon the individual will be reduced to a minimum. If laws remain a necessary evil, and if the prudent man, in this era of transition, must refrain from using violence against the existing law, he shall at least do his utmost to hasten the advent of the happy time, when all healthy-minded men unite in the spontaneous harmony of their desires. Anarchy, therefore, is the ideal towards which the thought of Godwin is drifting, and the very pronounced note of his individualism completes or corrects the communistic character of his social dreams.

In its excessive simplicity—for it eliminates almost all the elements of fact which must enter into the solution of the problem—this doctrine projects on to the immediate future the abstract lines of a necessarily distant ideal; and mixes generous hopes with rigorous, no doubt imprudent, deductions. Slightly modified by its own progress, and less exclusive in its intellectualism from 1800 onwards, it remained the most energetic stimulus of the revolutionary spirit on English soil. Its influence has been widely and deeply felt; and this it owes to the fact that the courage which animates it, born as it was of an ardent idealism, easily won the sensibilities of men hungering after a happiness, which the soul-stirring events of the time seemed to bring within their reach.

In the glowing anticipation of this new hope, modern "feminism" was being formulated at the same time. The woman who demanded equality of rights and equal educational privileges was to be the wife[1] of Godwin, but had formed her own ideas independently of him. Her book on the subject is of

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formed radical opinions, but had published nothing of importance, when the French Revolution suggested *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice, and Its Influences on General Virtue and Happiness,* 1793, a work which made him the chief intellectual representative of the most advanced party. His novels include: *Things as They Are, or the Adventures of Caleb Williams,* 1794; *St. Leon,* 1799; *Fleetwood,* 1805; *Mandeville,* 1817, etc. He published as well essays (*The Enquirer,* 1797); tragedies; a *Life of Chaucer,* 1803; a *History of the Commonwealth,* 1824–28. The essay on "Property" (from *Political Justice*) was republished by Salt in 1918. See Paul, *William Godwin,* 1876; studies by Ramus, 1907; Gourg, 1908; Roussin (Paris), 1914.

[1] Mary Wollstonecraft, born in 1759, was of Irish origin, married Godwin in 1797, and died the same year. Her published works include *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters,* 1787; *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman,* 1792. *Posthumous Works* appeared in

uneven merit and somewhat confused, written in a forcible and at times declamatory style, but enlivened by a sincere passion for justice. It touches upon delicate problems, which it has the merit of raising, with more wisdom and sanity than is usually conceded. It is a century in advance with its theories, which are to-day accepted, or have become so familiar as to be no longer formidable. It points out how among women themselves are to be found the most dangerous abetters of the social minority of their sex, and it attributes this blindness to a false form of education, while clearly outlining the connection between the inferiority of woman and her economic dependence. It urges the need for co-education, for a national system of teaching; upon love, marriage and family relationship, its arguments have a wholesome savour and a breadth of opinion, and are being gradually incorporated in the social life of our times.

The ideal which coloured the theories of the revolutionary thinkers appealed too vividly to certain imaginations, for the novel of the time not to give it expression. But here the effort is mediocre, and only interesting from the historical point of view. There was in the new faith, when once it won the mastery of minds, a magnetism so powerful that all sense of discrimination, as of artistic choice, became subjugated to its influence. Those among its disciples who, in the end, were able to escape, did regain, along with their independence, the power of translating into a language of noble beauty the story of their lost illusions.

In this sphere also Godwin is the most outstanding figure. His novels, despite their glaring faults and stretches of barren monotony, retain a vigour which is not without effect. This they owe not to their doctrine, but to the temperament of the writer, who is keenly attracted to any analysis of a searching and complex nature, and who in building up his plot allows his imagination to dwell fondly upon the emotional influence of terror—in a manner akin enough to that of Mrs. Radcliffe's school. With other novelists, the zeal of proselytism encourages the naïvety of a naturally simple art. Whether their revolutionary ardour leads them towards a complete vision of a regenerated humanity,[1] or whether less direct propaganda takes a more discreet form, even veiling itself at times, the æsthetic values nearly always lose through a didactic thesis, by which life is divided into opposite camps, in accordance with the rival forces of social good and evil.[2]

Those novels are fanciful, despite the element of seriousness which permeates them. They show the drift to Romanticism in the free scope which Godwin gives to his sentimental imagination; but the attempted pathos and the inventive talent of the writer scarcely possess any original or even striking qualities. A new movement in art is never exclusively the result of a general moral preparation. What is wanted first and foremost is an individual genius, who comes forward sooner or later, but who sometimes holds up all progress until he appears. The author's talent in these novels only sparkles forth here and there; and although they have not merited the discredit which has fallen upon them, they no longer interest anyone save the scholar.

1798. *Vindication,* etc., ed. Pennell, 1892. See biography by Pennell, 1885; study by Taylor, 1911; de Routen (*Mary Wollstonecraft and the Beginnings of Female Emancipation in France and England,* 1923).

[1] In *Anna St. Ives,* 1792, by Thomas Holcroft (1745–1809).

[2] Mention may be made of Charlotte Smith (see above, chap. iii. sect. 2): *Desmond,* 1792; of Robert Bage (1728–1801): *Man as He Is,* 1792, and *Hermsprong,* 1796; of Mrs. Inchbald (1753–1821): *A Simple Story,* 1791; *Nature and Art,* 1796; of Mrs. Opie (1769–1853): *Adeline Mowbray,* 1804. It is possible to add to this list the name of a somewhat different type of authoress, Miss Edgeworth (1767–1849): *Castle Rackrent,* 1800; *Belinda,* 1801; *Moral Tales,* 1801, etc. Her work tends rather towards the novel of social pity and humour than to doctrinal ideas. Her episodes of Irish life retain their vividness of description. Her work is very far from being negligible, and exercised an influence on Sir Walter Scott.

The same may be said of the dramatic work of revolutionary writers. Originating in the sentimental drama, the spirit and scope of which it naturally continues to foster, it has come to-day to share the latter's destiny. Before 1789, we find nearly all the elements of Romanticism during its formative stages expressed forcibly enough in Hannah More's[1] *Percy*, a play of pathos, and at the same time mediæval and humanitarian in character. Mrs. Inchbald,[2] whose verve and power of observation, together with her properly theatrical gifts, are by no means indifferent in their appeal, sets out to plead the cause of penitentiary reform, or of that essential goodness of heart, opposed to the corruptive influence of society, which after Rousseau found a defence in the teaching of Godwin. Holcroft[3] preaches the same gospel, but in a more blunt manner, being more explicit in his intentions; yet it must be admitted that he has life and movement. The younger Colman[4] after interweaving morality with his love for nature in an exotic setting, endeavours to incorporate it in scenes drawn from reality. If, however, this group of writers has left no great work, it is not due to false æsthetic principles. The problem play and the social drama will develop an intense vitality, when the nineteenth century has widely diffused the power to become emotionally interested in the interplay of ideas. To the public of 1790, however, such plots had little else than a superficial interest.

3. The Counter-Revolutionary Writers; The "Anti-Jacobin"; Burke.— Political satire had found encouragement in the conflict waged between Pitt and the Tory Party on the one side, the Whig Opposition on the other. From 1784 onwards, the *Rolliad*, a kind of fictitious epic, symbolising the intellectual sluggishness of the country squires, stubborn supporters alike of Church and State, is assailed in a series of versified parodies.[5] But with the triumph of the Revolution in France and the activity of its partisans in England, the instinctive desire for social preservation is alarmed; and the friends of order in their turn seize upon the weapon of ridicule. The excess to be feared seems no longer one of timidity, but rather of rashness. Irony is now on the side of a traditionalism which claims to be inseparable from good sense.

This cult of tradition, narrow and dogmatic, is stimulated to a remarkable vigour by the assurance that it has the broad support of national sentiment. The tone of the *Anti-Jacobin*[6] cannot be mistaken; it expresses both a temperamental and a racial hostility, in which patriotism, religion, devotion to the past, and the love for all accepted forms of discipline rise up horror-stricken against a contagious, manifold madness, which threatens all the altars of the nation's gods. The France of the Directory is jeered at and vilified, slashed for the Revolution whose fundamental ideas she has inherited, and no less for the new order which she painfully tries to build up. Her English partisans are scourged and dishonoured. Never has hatred, nourished by all that springs from the revolt of mind, heart and instinct, by national passion and social fear, given vent to so terrible a denunciation. And feeding on those deep roots, the inspiration has an easy, telling verve. The wit in that collection of lampoons is very rarely delicate; the tone is every way brutal. Yet in the sneering and insulting attitude it adopts there is evidence of an often happy, at times superior talent. The burlesque vein which it has tapped furnishes it—as in the case of Erasmus Darwin and *The Loves of the Plants*—with parodies of extreme ingenuity, of great value as verbal achievements; and when the satirical impulse gives way before the serious passion which lurks in those violent pleasantries, and which bursts out in a heart-felt call to the genius of England, that poetry, still classical in form, reaches a sinewy and simple eloquence.

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[1] 1745–1833; *Percy*, 1777; *The Fatal Falsehood*, 1779. She was a prolific writer, and not without interesting ideas. See the study by Meakin, 1913.

[2] *Such Things Are*, 1787; *Wives as They Were, and Maids as They Are*, 1797. See Littlewood, *E. Inchbald and Her Circle*, 1921.

[3] *The Road to Ruin*, 1792; *The Deserted Daughter*, 1795.

[4] *Inkle and Yarico*, 1787; *The Heir at Law*, 1797.

[5] *The Criticisms of the Rolliad* appeared in the *Morning Herald*, and were followed by the *Political Eclogues* and the *Probationary Odes*, of analogous inspiration. This method of literary attack found an ally in "Peter Pindar" (see above, chap. v. sect. 2). A collected edition appeared in 1791.

[6] *The Anti-Jacobin* appeared from November, 1798, to July, 1799. Its chief founders were George Canning (1770–1827), John Hookham Frere (1760–1846), and William Gifford (1756–1826), the future editor of the *Quarterly Review*. A collection of selected pieces was published by H. Morley (*The Anti-Jacobin, etc.*, 1890); see ed. Edmonds, 1890. See G. Festing, *J. H. Frere and His Friends*, 1899.

As an incentive, not only against the menace from abroad, but against the more dangerous madness which is creeping into the national consciousness of England, and awakens a belief in a justice based on the equality and fraternity of peoples, the *Anti-Jacobin* cites the name and work of Burke.[1] And of the thought of Burke, indeed, it is full.

Burke is first an orator, or rather an oratorical writer, for the texts which have been handed down to us owe nothing to improvisation; and neither his voice nor his delivery was such as to heighten in any way the effect of those writings. His eloquence, studied as it is and self-conscious, preserves its sincerity through the genuine power of a naturally fervid thought, which has an end in view, advances towards it, and discovers itself gradually, as it develops, through its own motion. His impassioned arguments are enough controlled by his will to be orderly; but the logical plan which they seem to follow is not really the deepest and innermost; we feel that, when present, such a plan is superadded, and serves only to lend more accuracy to the progress of a demonstration, the successive parts of which organically grow one from another.

Burke's phrasing is forcible, most often elevated, and not free from pomposity; but the natural loftiness of a mind which raises all that it touches, the breadth of an outlook which can cope with the vastest subjects, and calls up wide prospects, are such that the garment of form, with all its majesty, does not sit ill upon the body which it clothes. While the style of Burke can be compact in its precision, direct and compelling, it is most often vehement, ironical, or pathetic. His numerous images do not always testify to a perfect taste; but they are always striking. The language is cadenced, obeying a desire for proportion, dignity and harmony, which instinctively tends to regular measures and periodic sentences, but submits at will to the necessary variety of effect, turning then to short, sharp-edged statements; and thus the rhythm admits of all the irregularities which are called for by the living flow of the speaker's voice.

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[1] Edmund Burke, born in Dublin in 1729, was the son of a Protestant father and a Roman Catholic mother; he studied at Trinity College, next in London, where he published a parody on Bolingbroke, *A Vindication of Natural Society*, 1756; a treatise on *The Sublime and Beautiful* (see above, chap. iv. sect. 3). He entered Parliament in 1765, and from 1766 onwards he was a member of the Whig Opposition. He criticised the attitude of the North Ministry towards the American colonies, and came into prominence in political literature by his pamphlets (*Observations on the Present State of the Nation*, 1769; *On the Causes of the Present Discontents*, 1770; *Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol*, 1777); and by his speeches ("On American Taxation," 1774; "On Conciliation with America," 1775). He shared in the impeachment of Warren Hastings (1788, etc.). His misgivings as to the course of events in France began to manifest themselves as early as 1789; he attacked the Revolution in his *Reflections* (1790), broke with Fox and the Whigs, published *An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*, 1791; *Thoughts on the Prospect of a Peace with the Regicide Directory*, 1796–97, and died in 1797. *Works and Correspondence*, 1852; *Select Works*, ed. Payne, 1874–78; *Reflections*, ed. Grieve, 1910; *Selections*, ed. Hughes, 1921; *Letters* (selected), ed. Laski, 1922. See Morley, *Burke* (English Men of Letters), 1888; MacKnight, *Life and Times of Burke*, 1858–60; MacCunn, *Political Philosophy of Burke*, 1913; Meusel, *Burke und die Französische Revolution*, 1913; Samuels, *Early Life, etc., of Burke*, 1923.

The public speeches of Burke, and the treatises which he wrote to support various causes, belong equally to the literature of argument; they fall under the category of political eloquence. Now this kind of oratory shone with particular brilliance during the last thirty years of the eighteenth century. Hardly has Junius become silent when the conflict with America opens in Parliament and before the country at large; a prolonged struggle, in which the voice of Burke still sounds to us more audibly than all, but where many other voices commanded the attention of the time. Once this quarrel has been settled, the strong bearing of the Pitt Administration arouses intense opposition; the mental weakness of the king raises the question of a regency; 1788 sees the commencement of the trial of Warren Hastings, which only ends in 1795; and lastly, with the fall of the Bastille, the French Revolution becomes a daily problem, rousing the antagonism of parties to a pitch of excitement.

If during these troubled times the discussion of important matters of State takes on a new aspect, the change is traceable as well to other reasons. A broadening oligarchy accepts of the more frequent collaboration of public opinion, while the middle classes, enriched by industry, now openly claim a share in the government of the country. Then the publicity given to parliamentary debates is no longer opposed. Finally, English classical prose, now fully developed, is a subtle instrument which lends itself both to ordinary discussions of facts, and to the more ambitious efforts required of it by an age of oratory—an age of sentiment, when reason retains all its prestige; and when, from one end of Europe to the other, a uniform culture inspires a common confidence in discussion, in words, in the power of conviction, and in the goodwill of all thinking minds.[1]

But Burke's thought is too vigorous to remain inseparable from the form in which he expressed it. It has its own intrinsic value, whether it told on the course of historical events, or it was creative in the sphere of ideas. More than an orator, Burke is a statesman, capable of the shrewdest and deepest views; he owes this intuitive power to his strong sense of realities, to his varied culture, to his remembrance of the past, but above all, to his knowledge of mankind, and to the instinct he possesses of the complex reactions through which various social interests clash, adapt themselves, and are reconciled. His political insight is made of concrete perception and accurate psychology. His exact judgment as to the possible issues of the American revolt comes from his ability to understand the indomitable motives which prompted the defiant attitude of the colonists. If, as time goes on, he tends to change certain of his ideas, it is not due to any unprincipled fluctuations in character, but rather to the progress which is inevitable if personality has to keep abreast of life. First a Whig, then a Tory; at one time the defender of constitutional liberties, at another the sworn enemy of the French Revolution, all are complementary attitudes of one and the same mind. Undoubtedly, with Burke as with so many politicians in England and elsewhere, there was that secret shifting of temperament, as life went on, towards the preference for order, even if it entail the sacrifice of the search for improvement. But his intuition of the deepest roots of order did not undergo a substantial change. In 1775 he traces them to the free agreement and union of minds which cling with equal energy to a just tradition; in 1790 he no longer distinguishes them from tradition itself, which has established its right to live by living and lasting.

In this sense it may be said that the doctrine of Burke really represents a central point in the history of modern English thought. Through the activity of consciousness and analysis, the social and moral creations in which from the time of the Renaissance the original genius of the English people had revealed itself, are now one after another being defined. The theories of experimental philosophy and utilitarianism had already been formulated; political liberalism after 1688, and after Locke, had been given the matter-of-fact expression which it required. British conservatism is taken by Burke out of the dim regions of preconceived ideas, into the broad light of open discussion. A supreme consecration, and perhaps inevitable, but nevertheless dangerous; for there are religions—and a fervent belief in the superiority of life over intelligence is undoubtedly one of these—which gain nothing by being explained or defined in principle. However it may be, the strongest group of instincts at the core of the original British genius has been more solidly massed together, and endowed with a more distinct existence, from the time when Burke described it; at the same time, that body of moral forces has ever since more clearly revealed its bold defiance of reason. All the political ideas of the Conservatives and the Traditionalists originate in the teaching of Burke. Disraeli's real master was Burke, and no other.

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[1] The orators of the epoch, besides Burke, include Charles James Fox (1749–1806: *Speeches,* 1815; see biography by Trevelyan, new ed., 1923); Sheridan (see above, Book III. chap. vi. sect. 5); William Pitt (1759–1806: *Speeches,* 1808; *War Speeches,* ed. Coupland, 1915; *Life* by Stanhope, 1862; study by Whibley, 1906); Henry Grattan (1746–1820: *Speeches,* ed. Madden, 1859; *Life* by Dunlop, 1889).

His systematic hostility to the French Revolution denies and destroys the effort of the mind to build up a better world in accordance with its own requirements. He will not grant more intelligence or more justice to human things than the proportion which Nature allows; and in the evaluation of that quantity, he interprets Nature according to her ancient and declared will. What has been will be, not because progress and change are impossible, but for the reason that the laws of life govern all our desires, and that these laws are all embodied within the societies that at present exist and live. Any lasting growth is essentially organic; and the delicate organism of the social body cannot bear the sharp edge of intellectual thought, without perishing from its contact. The sacred majesty of an irrational order of things is thus given its genuine foundation, a mystical one; it is based on the mysterious decisions of a Providence who, having created evil and inseparably bound it up with good, has thereby intended to refuse man any hope to seriously reduce the sum of the former, without grievously impairing that of the latter. In its deepest implications, the doctrine of Burke is at one with the Christian spirit of pessimism.

To be consulted: *Cambridge History of English Literature,* vol. xi. chaps. i. ii. xii.; Cestre, *La Révolution française et les poètes anglais,* 1906; idem. *John Thelwall,* 1906; Conway, *Life of Thomas Paine,* 1892; Courthope, *History of English Poetry,* vol. v., 1905; vol. vi., 1910; Dowden, *The French Revolution and English Literature,* 1897; O. Elton, *A Survey,* etc., 1920; A. Gregory, *The French Revolution and the English Novel,* 1915; E. Legouis, *La Jeunesse de Wordsworth,* 1897; J. Morley, *Burke* (English Men of Letters), 1888; Leslie Stephen, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century,* 1902; Previté-Orton, *Political Satire in English Poetry,* 1910.

CHAPTER VII

PRE-ROMANTIC POETRY

1. Mason, Beattie, Bowles.—There is a significant gradation between the poets whose works continue and develop the transition towards new sources, and new artistic methods. A decisive step is taken when we pass from Mason and Beattie to Blake. The first two poets, standing upon the threshold of this period, inherit the achievement of their predecessors. In the very atmosphere around them, they find as floating suggestions the feeling for nature, melancholy, musing, the haunting love of ruins and the past. Out of those elements they make up a temporary synthesis. But their inspiration lacks the necessary strength and sincerity; they fail completely to realise the emancipation of poetical style. In one way they are the most representative of the pre-Romanticists, for with them tradition and the future are closely intermingled. To the reader of to-day, they still preserve some living interest; but the stamp of artificiality is upon all their work.

With Burns and Blake, the vigour of personality at last triumphs over literary convention. The one rediscovers the spontaneous truth of the heart; the other spiritualises language, melting its hardened crust, and so restores its former purity. The secret of Blake is none other than that of Wordsworth. His quite exceptional destiny, his temperament, did not permit of his founding a school, of his opening up in the eyes of all the broad direct avenue towards a new poetry. But in the full sense of the term, he was the first of the Romanticists.

Mason[1] cuts a mediocre figure beside Gray, of whom he is, as it were, a subdued copy. He is a scholar, or at least has scholarly pretensions; he is diligent and painstaking; his polished style and pathos suggest the leisure, the refinement of university life. But if he has the full conscience and methods of his friend, he has not the gift of his inspiration. His tragedies, prompted at once by a scrupulous classicism and by a lively historical imagination, are interesting efforts, but entirely artificial. *The English Garden* is not without its appeal; a feeling of tenderness, a true taste for simplicity and for Nature in her freedom, strive with the most conventional style, a professedly didactic purpose, and a descriptive rhetoric as cold as it is ornate. Certain of the deeper preferences of English sensibility are expressed in it; but they are voiced in a borrowed language, and there is no sign that the writer finds such a style inadequate.

Beattie[2] obeys a kind of vague instinct that the poetic medium requires being renovated. Venturing upon a great subject, he turns to the Spenserian stanza for an ample and beautiful rhythm. He handles it clumsily enough but not without some pleasant effects.

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[1] William Mason (1724–97), the friend of Gray, also lived at Cambridge; published two tragedies: *Elfrida*, 1753; *Caractacus*, 1759; a descriptive poem in blank verse: *The English Garden*, 1772–82. He edited the *Works* of Gray, and added a biography in which he incorporated the poet's letters and journal (1775).

[2] James Beattie (1735–1803), born in Scotland, became Professor of Moral Philosophy at Aberdeen, and wrote, in addition to several poems, an *Essay on Truth* (1770), which was an attack on Hume. He was also the author of *Essays* (1776), and of *Moral and Critical Dissertations* (1783). His main work, *The Minstrel* (1771–74), unfinished, was very successful. *Poetical Works*, ed. Dyer, 1866. See Forbes, *Beattie and His Friends*, 1904.

His other poems can be passed over, except a short meditation, *Retirement,* where there is a note of sincerity. The *Minstrel* is a work of vast conception, still didactic in theme, but with the added interest that it seeks to portray the inner life of the mind, and thus affords even in the matter itself the possibility of a lyricism which will be new and psychological. Beattie proposes as his subject the development of a past: Wordsworth's idea in *The Prelude* will be no other. But Beattie clothes his story in an atmosphere of legend, and introduces in a mediæval setting the wandering singer whom Macpherson and Percy had already endeared to their readers' imaginations. His craving for personal expression tends to give both his subject, and the metrical mould into which he has chosen to cast it, a note of meditative tenderness which is at times pleasing; while the artificial elements of the poem—its false archaism, its moralising theme, its still conventional style—fail to spoil the charm to be found in the true appreciation of the poet for the wild aspects of Scottish scenery. In the landscapes called up, in the emotion, and in the music of the language, the mind as well as the senses finds a spirit of harmony and a wealth of romantic suggestion. At other times, the abstractions are predominant. The second canto, which recalls *The Excursion* as the first does *The Prelude,* tends to be drily philosophical.

The work as a whole has its beauties, and, if compared with that of Wordsworth, seems surprisingly prophetical. The monotony of the measure, and the weak features of the style, do not altogether blot out some very commendable intentions—as, for example, the striving after a deep-felt and serious simplicity—which, taken up again by other writers, and much more fully realised, will prove to be creative.

This progress can be seen to a certain extent in the work of Bowles.[1] With him the quiet melancholy awakened by the contemplation of nature is expressed in words of moving simplicity. His *Sonnets* often speak the language of the heart; and although their inspiration tends to flag, and they do not reach, either, the unalloyed quality of a perfectly pure style, yet it is no wonder that such souls as thirsted for the freshness of genuine poetry should have found a relief in them; nor that the Lake poets should have hailed Bowles as their immediate predecessor.[2]

2. Burns.—Burns[3] brings an element of complication into what is otherwise the relatively simple evolution of English poetry. The influence of a half-foreign nationality, and the racy vigour of a son of the soil, quicken in him the germ of an unexpected originality. He is an innovator, but not after the manner of his English contemporaries.

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[1] William Lisle Bowles (1762–1850), a parson, and later canon of Salisbury. In his very large output of verses the most noteworthy are those of a collection of *Sonnets* (1789), augmented as edition succeeded edition. He edited Pope (1806), and criticised him so severely that Byron, Campbell and others entered against him into a hot controversy (summed up in *The Letters and Journals of Byron,* ed. Prothero, vol. v., 1901). *Poetical Works,* ed. Gilfillan, 1855.

[2] There is a mixture of sentimentalism and artificiality of style in the work of Anna Seward (1747–1809: *Louisa,* a novel in verse, 1782), and also in *The Triumphs of Temper* (1781) of William Hayley (1745–1820). The same traits, together with a blending of German and Italian influences, as well as an extreme pretentiousness, are the outstanding literary features of a group of writers called "The Della Cruscans" (Robert Merry, Mrs. Cowley, etc.), in whose works there is every evidence of the absolute decadence of classical form, aggravated, instead of being corrected, by a false Romanticism.

[3] Robert Burns, born in 1759 near Ayr in Scotland, was the son of a humble farmer; he worked in the fields and received a scanty education; but he reaped the benefit of the literary traditions of his country, and adopted them as his models. His first poems were circulated in manuscript form; in 1786 he published *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect,* the success of which opened an entrance for him into the fashionable literary circles of Edinburgh. In 1788 he returned to the plough, continued to write lyrical or satirical poems for various collections; then, abandoning the life of a farmer, was appointed "gauger" in the Excise. His premature death took place in 1796. *Poetical Works,* ed. Henley and Henderson, 1901; ed. Lang and Craigie, 1896; ed. Wallace,

The eighteenth century in Scotland sees the development of a literary renascence. The most noteworthy figure after Allan Ramsay,[1] in a long and uninterrupted line of gifted writers, is Robert Fergusson, who died at an early age, leaving part of his work in the original Scots dialect.[2] Burns pondered over and assimilated that tradition and those examples. He felt the exceptional value of a truly instinctive expression, born of experience, and steeped in the direct, sincere quality which words acquire when they are part and parcel of the everyday life of a people. Moreover, in those models he could find the first faint trace or outline of a national art: realism, humour, a lyricism which never loses sight of reality, and whose emotion is rarely free from a strain of malice. He has proclaimed his indebtedness to those predecessors. Every historical outlook is wrong but that in which Burns is regarded as heir to their line, the last and greatest of all. But his debt also extends to poetry south of the Border; he read Pope, Thomson, Gray and Young, and found in their school the discipline so necessary to check and direct the spontaneity of his style. A number of his poems are written in normal English; and these are certainly not all of an inferior order, though many are artificial.

It is difficult, therefore, to define exactly the position of Burns as regards the literature of his time. The language he employs is for the most part simple, full of a power of expression that is as yet undiminished; his inspiration, traceable to his immediate environment—country life, nature, love, the scenes and manners of village society—has all the freshness of spontaneous creation. And besides, this artistic matter has already been given definite shape; the Scots dialect is a literary instrument; Burns draws from a wealth of themes and rhythms of a specially intense character. Above all, he has the personal gift of an exceptionally precise, clean style; his mind combines the clearness which comes of understanding, with the easy turn of thought and language which is the reward of just and concrete impressions. From these converging influences is born an art that is supremely strong and restrained in tone, and which attains to an absolute purity of form without the least effort. The example of English Classical poetry had probably some share in that achievement; but the gift which it implies is a natural product, and all artificial influences had but little to do with it.

The quality of the work of Burns is that of a superior "classicism," in the æsthetic sense of the term; a classicism which is independent both of school and of precept, being in itself all-sufficing. The logic, balance, measure, economy and perfect propriety of his terms cannot be considered apart from the straightforward truth which is the soul of his expression. Dryden at times had this "inevitable" style; but in his forcefulness there is the suggestion of rhetorical artifice, when compared with the simple vigour of that of Burns.

The art of Burns is comprehensive, welcoming and uniting all sorts of tendencies. This is not to say that it is psychologically neutral; it has as it were its centre of gravity, and is more an art of the intellect than of the emotions. Yet it is in close touch with all the human element in life. Compared

1902; *Poems Published in 1786*, ed. Cleghorn, 1913. See Angellier, *Burns, la vie et les œuvres*, 1893; Carlyle, *Burns* (*Miscellaneous Essays*), 1854; Lockhart, *Life of Burns* (revised by Douglas, 1882; ed. Douglas, 1914); Shairp, *Burns*, 1879; Stevenson, "Some Aspects of Burns" (*Familiar Studies of Men and Books*), 1882; Elton, *Survey of English Literature*, 1780–1830, vol. i. chap. iv.; MacNaught, *The Truth about Burns*, 1921; Dakers, *Robert Burns, Life and Genius*, 1923; Sir J. Wilson, *The Dialect of Burns*, 1923.

[1] See above, Book II. chap. ii. sect. 9.

[2] Anglo-Scots, a dialect derived from Northern English.

with it, the rational poetry of a Pope is dry reading. In the work of Burns are to be found the inner elements of Romanticism: personal effusion, sensibility, a keen love for nature, a wealth of imaginative fancy, a sympathetic interest in the poor and in animals. But he is immune from all feverishness of the heart or of the head; his moments of absolute melancholy are few; his soul is healthily robust, too strong to be mortally wounded by the pangs of life, too sane to be overcome by any ecstasy.

A manly sense of liberty is the animating force of his genius. Essentially free-minded, he respects the spiritual kinds of greatness, and makes allowance for all other kinds with courtesy or, as the case may be, with irony. Burns is deeply aware of the dignity and the equality of men. Before the fall of the Bastille he was by instinct a Republican; after this event he was so in principle and confessedly, even to the point of entering into conflict with those around him; until the day when England was threatened with invasion, and then his patriotism was fired, so that he felt again at one with his friends. His poetry breathes a spirit of irreverence; he spares neither Church nor clergy; his independent beliefs do not feel bound by orthodox faith. With an almost Gallic verve he pokes fun at the devil, makes free with the theme of eternal damnation, and laughs at the secret troubles which beset the Puritan conscience. He opposes a good-natured frankness to the outward show of austere demeanour, and maintains that true virtue lies in generosity. His private life, his friendships, his love affairs, his marriage, and his paternal feelings, are all reflected in his poetry, the faithful mirror of an existence which has made a full and open confession of itself.

His work is of a mixed nature. A great part is composed of occasional verse, short poems, mere sketches one might say, jotted down from day to day, in most cases without any great depth of meaning, although the touch of a master is evident; or again, circumstantial poems, lacking in real inspiration. What remains is almost entirely of the first order; whether it be that realistic imaginative verve, so lively and yet so sympathetically human, which evokes the truculence of the Jolly Beggars and the wondrous adventure of Tam o' Shanter; or the still inoffensive mockery which gibes at Doctor Hornbook; or that which penetrates with keener irony the secret grudges harboured up in *Holy Willie's Prayer;* or again, the sterling strength and frankness cast into the ballad form of *John Barleycorn;* or lastly, the fresh and graceful simplicity of the idylls and elegies, where the atmosphere is either one of tenderness or one of sad regret. Nothing could be more varied than Burns's inspiration, destined as it was to spread only over a few fruitful years.

To the foreigner, and even to the uninitiated Englishman, the language of Burns's Scots poems offers some difficulty. The reader finds a glossary indispensable; but when once the linguistic obstacles have been surmounted, the use of dialect will lend greater charm to the work. It breathes a spirit of naïvety, and at the same time has a strain of lurking slyness; it conjures up a peasant-like atmosphere of shrewd observation and genial good-nature. Such dialectal forms imply and suggest a power of perception which is essentially concrete; they reveal a keen sense of character and of ridicule, while at the same time they have a canniness and an impassibility pregnant with mockery. Not only do they favour the introduction of the humorous element, but they are themselves already part and parcel of humour. Indeed there is nothing more essential to the poetry of Burns than this inborn gift of quiet mirth, of a gaiety which brings with it into almost everything a touch of fine irony; it is the expression and the playful revenge of a personality, which judges life without embittered rancour, and loves it without illusions.

Burns has been as successful with the metre of his poems as with the language. He cannot be termed a creator in this sense, because he has borrowed from his predecessors, and is in no small way indebted to national popular song. The simplest of the metres, and those in which he shows the greatest skill, are of a light, quick movement, whether it be to convey the sprightly thrust of some satirical impulse, or the vigorous notations of the poet's descriptive talent. Many of the best poems are written in the traditional six-lined stanza—four long interlaced with two short—which appears in each instance to end in a pirouette, a sly comment, or the brief avowal of some bestirring emotion.[1]

3. **Blake.**—The psychological secret of moral renovation lies in the loosening of the soul. When its efforts to realise art, truth or virtue have become artificial and sterile through their automatic working, the result of a prolonged strain, it finds a new fecundity by renouncing what have proved to be exhausting and fruitless ambitions; by returning, through simplicity, to its own deeper powers; by resuming contact with the elementary energy of the subconscious. That rule which holds in the case of individuals is no less binding in that of collective minds. English literature at the close of the eighteenth century is pregnant with a new intuition, which it seeks laboriously to discover by means of a parallel and forced heightening of the tone in style and in feeling. It is then that with Blake, just as with Wordsworth a short time later, an absolute sincerity, a mystic renunciation, the boldness of a self that offers itself in its nakedness, reveal the treasure of a yet untapped spirituality, which, inward and secret as it was, still lay within easy and direct reach; and that literary expression from these fresh sources is rejuvenated and renewed.

If the theory of periodic revivifications in art is something other than a mere suggestive image, its exigencies are still better answered by Blake[2] than by Wordsworth. As a writer he is much less occupied with theory, and shows less self-consciousness; his new departures follow no set programme. No reformer ever was more thoroughly ruled by instinct. This is why in certain directions, and at the very first attempt, he goes farther than Wordsworth. But if he surpasses the latter in the wealth of his prophetic gospel, as in the simple purity of his inspiration, he lacks his sense of balance. For the working out of a literary technique, and the application of a doctrine to the rules which preside over the art of words, what is wanted is a cool judgment. However unique and exceptional the part played by Wordsworth may have been in reality, he is still in our eyes the leader of a school. Blake, on the contrary, was and remains a solitary figure.

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[1] Several talented writers of Scottish verse were the contemporaries of Burns, or came immediately after him. Mention may be made of Lady Nairne (1766–1845), Robert Tannahill (1774–1810), and Sir Alexander Boswell (eldest son of Johnson's biographer, 1775–1822). James Hogg (1770–1835), the shepherd-poet and author of *The Queen's Wake* (1813), etc., occupies a place apart from the others, since his gifts are rather those of the English Romanticists.

[2] William Blake (1757–1827) was born in London where his father, an Irishman, carried on a small hosiery business. Even during his early years the young Blake showed himself a dreamer and a visionary; he was self-taught; poetry and painting equally attracted him. Apprenticed to an engraver, he studied at the Royal Academy, but gave up the orthodox ways of art, preferring to earn his living as an engraver of illustrations for various publishers. The printing of his *Poetical Sketches* (1783) was paid for by his friends. With the help of his wife, he printed and published by an original process the illustrated text of the *Songs of Innocence* (1789), *Songs of Experience* (1794), and the "Prophetic Books," which include *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790), *America* (1793), *The Book of Urizen* (1794), *The Book of Los* (1795), *Milton*, *Jerusalem* (1804). At his death he left numerous unpublished fragments in prose and verse, notably the *Four Zoas* (1800?). His work as an illustrator and engraver was also very considerable. *Works*, ed. Ellis and Yeats, 1893; *Poetical Works*, ed. Sampson, 1905, 1913; 1921; ed. Ellis, 1906; *Poems*, ed. Yeats (Muses' Library), 1893; *Letters*, ed. Russel, 1906; *Selections from the Symbolical Poems*, ed. Pierce, 1915. See the biographies by Gilchrist, new ed., 1906; of A. Symons, 1907; studies by Swinburne (new ed., 1906); Benoit, 1906; Ellis, 1907; P. Berger (*W. Blake, Mysticisme et Polésie*), 1907; Saurat (*Blake and Milton*), 1920; Gardner (*Vision and Vesture*, 1916; *W. Blake, the Man*, 1919); Allardyce Nicoll, 1922.

His extreme originality kept him apart from the general public, and official recognition. Only a small group knew his genius or dimly felt his greatness; and he pursued his indefatigable labour in relative obscurity. Never did a temperament show greater individuality. He felt some influences; but in his mode of thinking, in his imagination, and in his artistic tastes, all his main decisions are solely his own. He invented or re-created for himself all that he set his hand to. His drawings bear the stamp of a characteristic and inimitable vision. His poetry deals in the subtlest kind of symbolism with a skill that cannot be matched. His philosophy is a series of intuitive flights into the realm of the Absolute, soaring with tranquil and imperious assurance; to our minds they are presented as a group of strange, complicated symbols, which to Blake are the clearest, the most familiar realities. His mind works in open defiance of all the normal laws of logic; the language which he speaks, in the latter part of his work, is sometimes unintelligible. His thought, powerfully creative and free from all commonplace forms, has shaken itself loose as well from the most necessary conventions. It moves and has its being on the extreme edge of the thinkable, or even beyond, just as his eager expression will cross the bounds of the inexpressible.

The first poems of Blake, together with lyrical fragments which he wrote at intervals throughout his life, and which are not of a very different nature, form in themselves a realm of poetry apart from every other. It is a domain of purely spontaneous effort, creative through its power of spiritual realisation. The working of an inner light, and mysticism, are already in evidence; but a youthfulness of heart will not allow the poet to entertain their exuberant fancies; the predominant, almost exclusive theme of his poetry is the feelings of a child's impassioned soul; and the natural tone of its language is a moving simplicity, while its emotions possess a pure ardour. The essence of Romanticism is here in these short poems, whether the main subject be love and happiness, as in the *Poetical Sketches* and the *Songs of Innocence,* or the note of grief and rebellion against a world given over to evil be more pronounced, as in the *Songs of Experience.* The universe here is seen through the eyes of a child, felt through its senses, judged through its heart; and this child is the symbol of the most delicate and courageous intuitions in the human mind, just like the soul of peasants in those moments of sober exaltation which will be to Wordsworth the very source and inner substance of poetry. The elements of Romanticism are present, either actually or potentially; some—such as the sense of wonder, the contemplation of nature through fresh eyes, an intimate sympathy with the varieties of existence most distant from the reach of our clear intelligence—whatever belongs, in one word, to a sensibility suffused with imagination—are found to the highest degree; others, such as the obsession of the past or the absorbing sense of self, in a much lesser degree. There is even at times a hint of namby-pambiness, but that puerility is no less strong than it is graceful; the clear eyes which questioningly look at nature, animals and man, are endowed with a singular acuity of vision. Still, everything they see is bathed in a halo of mystery and beauty; there radiates from them meek pity no less than a holy anger. Blake's first style is in a way a juvenile form of Romanticism; and in those early songs English poetry, without being conscious of it, thoroughly undergoes the miraculous process of its rejuvenation.

Here the words welded together by a pure inspiration are as smoothly joined as the molecules in a flowing stream; they are perfectly adapted to the thought because they are as simple as possible, and the thought is itself simple. They do not strive after elegance, and yet achieve it by means of their perfect adaptation. They do not aim at being intense, and yet are expressive because they are still soaked in the feeling from which they sprang. They have the cadenced flow of natural music, each word joining the next in a rhythm whose measure is indistinguishable from the accent of the words, or from the modulation of the phrase. Here is the melody, somewhat thin but supremely spontaneous, of the soul in its moments of emotion. In the poetry of Blake the dried-up spring of Elizabethan lyricism may be said to well up again.[1]

These first poems, however, are not all of an equal quality. They are not free from prosaic touches; jarring or weak notes are heard, traceable to the over-impatient ardour of the poet. Here and there a painful feverishness invades and disturbs the quiet effusion of the thought. The "Prophetic Books" are the work of an unruly genius, of a mature thinker whose presence makes the artist in Blake still greater, but who changes the exquisite poet into an excited visionary.

The doctrine of Blake is a confused assemblage of desires and impulses; it may be likened to a vast gospel of liberty. In its daring outlook upon everything it embraces all the political ideas of the French Revolution, with their social consequences; and even goes as far as the vague unlimited vistas of anarchic individualism, of free mysticism and of the modern criticism of moral values. All settled criteria and faiths are there upset at a single stroke. Whether it be the orthodox religion of Christ, or the traditional notions of good and evil, or again, rational and scientific beliefs, the same revolutionary spirit reverses the previous order of things with undoubting enthusiasm. On one hand, it reaches and even passes the religion of a Swedenborg and the unbending postulates of the mystics of the Puritan Republic; on the other, it foretells all the work of liberation by which contemporary psychology has endeavoured to overthrow the control of moral prohibition and repression. Blake is the prince of spiritual revolt; but his doctrinal ideas, harbouring within the confines of his own consciousness, and only perceptible in the pages of his magnificent though obscure work, have wielded no influence; they linger in literature like some hidden explosive force, and only reveal their inner meaning to the immune minds of scholarly adepts. England, at the time when she was bent upon a policy hostile to the French Revolution, did not even know of that vehement and sweeping denial of all her cherished idols.

A manifold and yet coherent symbolism expresses these ideas, uniting them and at the same time emphasizing their relationship one with another. The mythical vision of Blake creates an original cosmogony; the metaphysical or religious con[illegible] are imbued with life, given a form, and clothed in a kind of gigantic humanity which recalls to mind the imaginative creations of Michael Angelo and Dante. These personages, once become the familiar guests of his thoug[illegible]e, meet, or oppose each other in the far-stretching fields of time and space, and the destiny of the spheres depends on their cosmic interplay. The artist, the seer, spellbound by symbolical images, and the thinker haunted by intellectual entities, are now one and the same person; the work of Blake, a maze of intermingling forms and ideas, is little else than an apocalypse, a realm of darkness peopled by supernatural beings, where one and the same idea develops throughout a continued series of signs and conventional equivalents, but where any attempt at a precise interpretation would be hazardous. Only perhaps in some of the creations of Hugo would it be possible for a Frenchman to glean an idea of the strange world of Blake's symbolic thought.

It cannot be said that Blake in the "Prophetic Books" conforms to any of the normal conditions of literary or picturesque expression. To find a close connectedness between the successive terms is well-nigh impossible. The style has often a biblical grandeur; the rhythm of the verse is ample, free, rugged, but sometimes instinct with unequalled majesty; and magnificent intervals are scattered through vast stretches of arid or obscure vaticination. The voice of the poet is still to be heard in passages of powerful evocation, just as his touch can be seen in frescoes whose broad sweep is as vast as the mind of the visionary who by now has taken his place. But his language, to be understood, demands a sight practised and trained in deciphering it; and for a century the "Prophetic Books"—whose full wealth of content was revealed only at a recent date—have had no influence except on a small group of faithful admirers.

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[1] The fragment, *Edward the Third* (*Poetical Sketches*), is very unequal, but has pages which recall in a striking fashion the best qualities of the Elizabethan dramatic style.

To be consulted: Angellier, *Burns,* 1893; Beers, *History of English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century,* 1899; Berger, *W. Blake,* 1907; *Cambridge History of English Literature,* vol. x. chaps. vi. and vii., vol. xi. chaps. viii. ix. x.; O. Elton, *A Survey of English Literature,* 1780–1830; vol. i. 2nd ed., 1920; Hugh Walker, *Three Centuries of Scottish Literature,* 1893.

BOOK V

THE ROMANTIC PERIOD (1798–1832)

CHAPTER I

THE FIRST GENERATION OF POETS

1. Romanticism in Itself, and in Its Relation to Society; the Two Phases.—The first thirty years of the nineteenth century form a natural period. Certain characteristics, which have long been growing more definite, now acquire an extreme intensity. We witness the realisation in all its plenitude of a type of emotional and imaginative literature that has escaped from the constraining forces of sovereign Reason, as even from those incorporated in the expression itself. This consummation is brought about by an inner progress, but at the same time it is favoured by the general influences of the social and moral surroundings.

After the great upheaval caused by the transformation of industry, after the religious awakening of Methodism and evangelism, the decisive shock to thought comes with the French Revolution. It is legitimate enough to date, as is often done, the beginning of the new age in literature from the publication of the anonymous work which united the young talents of Wordsworth and Coleridge (1798). With the one as with the other, the ardour of a generosity which may change its object, but never changes its nature, is the main origin of the poetic idealism; and the revolutionary faith which had hitherto animated them is the source of their artistic and human vocation. They are indebted to it for the assurance and authority of their doctrine, for what establishes them as the long expected theorists and prophets.

The spiritual quality of the eminent poets who thus appear on the very threshold of English Romanticism helps us to gain some ideas as to its inner nature and the mental forces governing it. Romanticism can be defined only in terms of pure psychology. Any other formula alters or limits arbitrarily its very essence.

English Romanticism is not one artistic principle in conflict with another. If Wordsworth and Coleridge do share for a brief moment a controversial doctrine, their agreement very quickly gives way before their temperamental differences; and none of the writers whom posterity classes with them or among their immediate successors follows their example on this point. Romanticism in England is much less clearly than in France the affirmation of an innovatory æsthetic creed, as opposed to an orthodox art. English literature, of a less codified and disciplined nature than that of France, was less subservient to an explicit system of rules which had been, so to speak, officially registered by enlightened opinion, incorporated in manners, observed by learned bodies and upheld by an Academy. The general public in England is in no way impassioned over the quarrels of different schools; indeed a battle such as that fought over Hugo's drama, *Hernani,* is unknown in this country. A new type of poetic creation, which for long has been in a state of obscure growth, now takes definite shape in certain pronounced traits, and declares its independence towards the past with a superior distinctness, which tends to become aggressive. But the initiative shown by Wordsworth is merely an episode—though of a very full significance—in a whole movement which on all sides is of even broader importance. And if one examines only the conscious principles at issue, one is forced to admit the presence of embarrassing exceptions. The cult of former values, and that of Pope, are still to be found in Byron; while the effort of Keats and Shelley is directed along lines which have little in common with the doctrine of Wordsworth and Coleridge.

English Romanticism does not consist in the triumph of "self." The personality of the writer has a characteristic place in it, because sensibility and imagination are of the very essence of individuality, whilst intelligence tends to the general. Everything considered, classicism laid stress upon the impersonal aspects of the life of the mind; the new literature, on the other hand, openly shifts the centre of art, bringing it back towards what is most proper and particular in each individual. This is a consequence, and not an initial cause.

Nor does English Romanticism primarily consist in a return to a national tradition, although in a very real and deep sense it is so. The idea of restoring the broken continuity of a formerly normal inspiration, which the attraction of a different art—an attraction enhanced by the spontaneous transformation in taste—had dried at its very source, is only partially and at intervals present in the conscious thought of those poets who realise it. And when they do dream of reanimating the past, it is not altogether for its national and familiar quality, but on account of its intrinsic virtues, and of the moral attributes they see in it.

This is equivalent to saying, on the other hand, that English Romanticism is not the outcome of foreign influences either. The part played by such a contagion, at this date, is much less significant in England than in France. The stimulating effect of certain themes which have emanated from Germany, or of which Germany supplied the most typical forms, is a recognisable but secondary force in the development of literature from 1790 to 1830.[1]

English Romanticism, in itself, is the active reawakening, in the larger number of writers, of a creative impulse of a type formerly current, which for many years had tended to become rare, and almost to disappear; but which during the last fifty years, on the other hand, had shown signs of a growing revival. To speak in this connection of sensibility and imagination as two distinct faculties would be misleading; what one has to realise is the intimate fusion, the close reciprocal dependence of these two inner activities. The Romantic spirit can be defined as an accentuated predominance of emotional life, provoked or directed by the exercise of imaginative vision, and in its turn stimulating or directing such exercise. Intense emotion coupled with an intense display of imagery, such is the frame of mind which supports and feeds the new literature. The works of art which give the epoch its distinct character spring from a creative effort which has been prompted through the exaltation of these two groups of tendencies. One of the two groups, no doubt, may be dominant in relation to the other; but as a rule they function as one, and in too compact a way to permit of analysis. The rather primitive or derived part of emotion or imagery offers an interesting but difficult problem, the solution of which in each particular case does not affect the value of the general interpretation here put forth.

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[1] See below the bibliographical notes on Coleridge and Scott; and for an outline of the whole subject, L. M. Price, *English-German Literary Influences*, 1920; E. Margraf, *Der Einfluss der deutschen Litteratur auf die englische am Ende des achtzehnten und im ersten Drittel des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, 1901; A. C. Bradley, *English Poetry and German Philosophy in the Age of Wordsworth* (*Manchester*, 1909); J. M. Carré, *Goethe en Angleterre*, 1920.

This interpretation enables us to include and to connect together all those works customarily acknowledged as Romantic. No other, it seems, would permit us to include them all.

It goes without saying that a formula of this kind does not exhaust the special properties of Romanticism as we have it in 1820; it does not do justice to all that is particular and unique in this phase of the English moral rhythm. If epochs in literature are by their origin, and in their very substance, psychological moments, and if these moments obey a law of alternation which after a while brings them back, there remains to be defined in the case of each of them the subtle characteristics which give it its individual figure among the similar periods.

The Elizabethan age had already been essentially an age of Romanticism. What are the traits which distinguish the later Romanticism from the earlier? In the first place there are delicate differences due to the immediate happenings and to near historical influences. No one beating of the moral rhythm ever completely resembles another, be it for the reason that history never entirely repeats itself. The French Revolution, for instance, is a unique event.

But the capital difference is of a more inner nature. The history of thought is less apt to repeat itself than any other sequence: the reason is that a new state of the mind could not possibly be identical with a former one which it recalls, since it adds to it the continuous experience gained in the interval of time, an experience inscribed in the very perception of its intrinsic newness. The looked-for difference lies precisely in this, that the Romanticism of 1820 knows and feels itself to be a second period of its kind, and not the first. Its consciousness of itself is spontaneously turned to the past; it is wholly permeated with an aspiration which exalts it: a zealous impulse carrying it towards earlier forms of existence. It is, so to say, under the haunting influence of feelings already experienced of a moral life which has formerly been lived, and which memory would fain recapture. This subtle impression of regret mingled with the joy of a discovery, this recognition of a land at once strange and familiar, where the heart finds itself at home, as it proceeds to explore it, impregnates all the fibres of English Romanticism; and the same spirit is perceptible in French Romanticism, although no doubt in a lesser degree.

And it is much rather through a probing deeper into the self, than through the exercise of pure imagination, that the heart's desire is attained. A feeling of nostalgic strangeness is essential to this literature, because consciousness is in quest of a certain mood which is a thing of the past, and because in an obscure way it grasps the reality of the mood, and not a mere image. By an effort of spiritual will-power and intuition this form of life can be retrieved from its dormant state, and restored to the plenitude of being. Just as individual memory is a latent persistence of the thing remembered, so Romanticism was ever present in the background of the classical spirit. Its resurrection is really in the nature of an awakening.

Thus the "wonder" of the Romanticists is the enthralling discovery, the progressive lighting-up of an inner horizon, which extends beyond the limits of clear consciousness; it is the perception of objects in the magic garb with which our fresher vision invested them of yore, and which our tired eyes had forgotten. The obsession of distant centuries is the mysterious attraction of strong modes of feeling of which the collective memory has preserved a confused recollection, and which it naturally associates with remote phases of its experience. These tendencies in the Romanticism of 1820 are not mere elements of chance and accident, but inevitable and constitutive characteristics.[1]

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[1] The elementary fact of memory is accepted by our instinct as simple; it awakens, however, and naturally enough, an impression of strangeness. The domain of remembrances is the favourite realm of mystery. The slightest unbalancing of this func-

Such is, in its broad lines, the psychological attitude of the writers; but the case is different with the general public.

No doubt, there exists a moral attitude common to the artists, to such at least as reflect the character of the age. This attitude is called forth and encouraged, broadly speaking, by the circumstances of the mental environment. It is very far, however, from standing in a simple relation to this environment; from receiving only favourable impulses; or from representing the actual tone of this environment, save by a distant approximation.

At the time when Romanticism definitively makes its appearance, no sudden break is revealed in the movement of minds. As is ever the case, the passage from one epoch to another is effected by a silent and gradual transition. But moreover, it would be erroneous to believe that the Romantic period is marked by a general and common exaltation of souls. If one looks at society as a whole, this period does not coincide with a phase of exuberance, but rather with one of unrest and of a secret want of balance. There is no noticeable increase in the public cult of emotion; indeed, in certain respects, it would rather appear to be decreasing. Outwardly, at least, the sentimentalism inherited from the preceding age is contradicted by the elegant or cynical scepticism of contemporary manners. The Court and the aristocracy, despite official decorum, set the example of loose frivolity. The English Regency recalls, after the lapse of a hundred years, that of the eighteenth century in France. The bulk of the nation, however, pursues the task of industrial and commercial expansion; its practical standard is that of a utilitarianism which daily becomes more clearly defined. The *mal du siècle* does not possess in England the character of an almost universal epidemic; in its serious form, it only affects exceptional types; while in the average circles of cultivated society it only assumes the benign form of a moral disquietude, to which the unsettled condition of the political world contributes as much if not more than the instability in the moral life itself.

The full completion of a new literature is here therefore a delayed effect; or rather an organic and complex phenomenon, the fruit of a long preparation, in which the distant past plays a part not less important than that of the recent past or of present circumstances. The state of society from 1800 to 1830 is as unable to provide an explanation of Romanticism, as it is on the other hand able to throw light on the detail, the accidents and even the internal divisions of the movement.

For in the sphere of politics, this period has a strongly marked and clear outline, the relation of which to the course of literature is as definite as it is simple. English Romanticism is not a homogeneous group of tendencies and writers. One must distinguish in it two successive generations, the limit of which would roughly coincide with the final downfall of Napoleon. Until about 1815, England is concentrated in a national effort to combat the France of Revolutionary and Imperial times. This contracting of interests stirs it to a fuller sense of its own traditions, while making it impervious to the direct radiation of the Revolutionary ideal. The first Romanticism, therefore, puts

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tion results in a deep disturbance of consciousness. Everyone knows the very particular value which with modern writers is attached to the "paramnesia," or illusion of false recognition (which might be, as M. Bergson would have it, the pure reappearance of a past state). It plays a prominent part with the English Romantic poets.—It seems certain, that if Romanticism is bathed in an atmosphere of wonder, this is not only because the imagination, for so long repressed, now fully indulges itself, and at once seeks its satisfaction in the wonderful. All that Romantic writers imagine and feel is accompanied by a shade of wonder, because they see these emotions and these images rise within themselves with a surprising spontaneousness, and because all such imaginings, in spite of their novelty, bring with them a disturbing impression of an intimacy of old date. Romanticism is as a whole, in this respect, a phenomenon of collective "paramnesia," the reviviscence of a subconscious personality.

itself forth as a reaction against this ideal. The feelings, instincts and imagination which it brings into play, and which it exploits with audacious freedom, are linked up by it with the permanent fund of British originality.

The mysticism upon which the poetical reform of Wordsworth and Coleridge is based thus seeks its justification and its encouraging precedents in a national idealism, where a sympathetic interest in the poor enters as an element, but where there is no place for a foreign gospel of the rights of man. And this sympathy is justified, according to these writers, by the moral dignity of a peasant race attached to the soil for years, whose spirit goes back, beyond the century of Reason and enlightenment, to the faith and patriotism of bygone ages. In the literary field, the Lake poets claim as their authority the examples of the Elizabethan Renaissance; in the social sphere, they lay stress on the noble simplicity of a class in which traditional virtues are still lingering. It is in this light that they view their relationship—which is wholly one of hostility and defence—with the great political turmoil, the shock of which has never, in fact, ceased to produce a fecund bestirring in their souls.

About 1815, the situation is reversed. The Tory reaction has no longer any object; or if it outlives its original purpose, it must divest itself of the garb of disinterestedness with which the threatened security of a common patrimony had invested it. On the other hand, some economic and political forces are telling with added vigour in favour of an impatient liberalism. The middle-class business people and the citizens of the great industrial centres demand a share in public affairs as in electoral rights. The victorious struggle with the French Empire leaves England impoverished, perturbed and preoccupied with internal problems. The financial and agricultural crisis neutralises the effect of commercial prosperity. Stimulated by these facts, the offensive waged by agitators and philosophers alike against an oligarchic régime becomes fiercer than ever, while the selfish system of the "Holy Alliance" in Europe is now faced with the growing hostility of the peoples.

In an atmosphere such as this, the second generation of Romanticists breathes a spirit of moral revolt. Without abjuring the authority in art of the Elizabethan models, it refuses to recognize any prestige in tradition itself, and severely criticises a present that is overruled by the fear of progress, as by conventional privileges and lies. By way of direct transmission or derived influence, this generation receives the heritage of revolutionary thought; it links up the impassioned intensity of its psychological tone with ideas of liberty and rebellion, with a keen determination to secure independence and realise justice, and with an exclusive cult of the beautiful. It is innovatory, critical, and readily places itself outside the pale of common obligations.

The writers of the first group, even if they run counter to the orthodox habits of language and style, are nevertheless in moral harmony with a large majority of the public. They outdistance their contemporaries by the fullness of their spiritual life, but are not in a state of open conflict with them. The Romanticism of the Lake poets is a kind of purification and deepening of normal existence; it fronts society as an example and permanent solicitation. It takes its stand upon the emotions that are common to all, and only seeks, by stimulating them, to idealise them into poetry. The second generation, on the contrary, sets up a decided opposition between the artist and his surroundings. It carries the ardour of feeling and imagination to a degree at which the average temperament would seem to perceive an excess threatening the balance of personality; and at the same time, it raises against the established order of things a manifold protestation instinct with generous passion, haughty sarcasm or æsthetic detachment. Thus Romanticism becomes a literature of social conflict. It appeals to the vital forces of the soul against the rule of interests and cold calculation; it attracts to its banners the zealous and the young, but not without provoking the hostility of the average man.

In a parallel but different plane, meanwhile, the theorists of philosophical radicalism are actively pursuing a somewhat similar aim; but they employ a language that is more intelligible, while their reasoning stops far short of the enthusiasm or the irony of the poets. Despite this accord with an intellectual movement destined at least to a partial success, the Romanticism of 1820 deviates from the conditions necessary to ensure the durability of an artistic phase; it exceeds the average powers of the public. Born of a long psychological development, and transposing, as it does, into the domain of art an agitation, an emotional bestirring which society was determined to put an end to, it requires from all minds a sympathy which only a morally liberated élite could grant it.

At a very early stage, therefore, it was severed from the only roots that could nourish it. The literature of a small number, it never became really popular. To be more widely accepted, it had to wait until a reactionary movement towards balance had set in against it; and until with the evidence of its decline there was effaced the danger with which it had seemed to threaten society—a society which above all desired to live.

2. Wordsworth.—Wordsworth's[1] creative originality among English poets remains closely linked to his intimate contact with the Revolutionary faith. A spiritual bond was thus formed never to be broken. The enthusiasm for the fraternity of mankind played the very part in his life that religious conversion has done on English soil towards the formation of so many active souls. From this glow was kindled the flame of an idealism which varied much in its expression, and even seemed to belie itself in belying its first forms, before it declined with age. But it was never completely extinguished, preserving as it did until the end a radiating power that was still effective. And although he had become the adversary of all reform, Wordsworth remained

[1] William Wordsworth, born in 1770 in the Lake district, came of a lower middle-class family, and after a rather hard life as a boy, studied at Cambridge (1787–91), spent a vacation holiday in the Alps (1790), then resided for 13 months in Orleans, Blois, etc. (1791–92); here he was won over to the cause of the French Revolution. On his return to England, the Reign of Terror, the state of war with France, and the trouble left in his soul by his passion for a young French girl, Annette Vallon, whose daughter he recognised but whom he believed he could not marry, all plunged him into a fit of pessimism, which his adhesion to the intellectual theses of Godwin failed to alleviate. He published poems (*Descriptive Sketches, An Evening Walk,* 1793), wrote a tragedy (*The Borderers*). Retirement in the heart of nature, and the sympathy of his sister Dorothy, brought moral healing, which in turn led to a surer conviction of his poetic vocation. A friend of Coleridge, he was influenced by the latter's mystic idealism, which he turned to a rather moral and human faith. The two worked out the literary doctrine of which the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) were the anonymous manifesto (enlarged editions, 1800, 1802, etc.). At the same time Wordsworth drew up the plan of a great philosophical poem, *The Recluse* (unfinished); he wrote fragments of it, such as *The Prelude* (from 1798 to 1805; published in 1850), and *The Excursion* (1814). After a visit to Germany, he settled in the Lake district, at Grasmere, then at Rydal Mount. His inspiration, less fertile than before, created poems of an accent generally more moralising, where expression was given to a political, social, and religious teaching of a definitely conservative character. He published *The White Doe of Rylstone,* 1815; *Peter Bell,* 1819; *The River Duddon,* 1820; *Ecclesiastical Sketches,* 1822; a collection of his *Sonnets,* 1838, etc. A profitable sinecure (1813), honours, popularity, had by now all come his way; elected to the Laureateship in 1843, he died in 1850. *Poetical Works,* ed. by Hutchinson, 1904; *Lyrical Ballads,* ed. by Littledale, 1911; *Prelude,* ed. by Worsfold, 1904; *Prose Works,* ed. by Knight, 1896; *Prefaces and Essays,* ed. by George, 1892; the *Journals* of Dorothy Wordsworth were edited by Knight in 1897; *Selections,* ed. by Ham. Thompson, 1918. See studies by Myers (English Men of Letters, 1881); Herford (*Age of Wordsworth*), 1897; Magnus (*Primer of Wordsworth*), 1897; Raleigh, 1903; Punch, 1907; Legouis (*Jeunesse de Wordsworth*), 1897; idem, *William W. and Annette Vallon,* 1922; Cestre (*Révolution Française et poètes anglais*), 1906; Barstow (*W.'s Theory of Poetic Diction*), 1917; Harper (*W. W., His Life, Works and Influence*), 1916; H. W. Garrod, 1923.

none the less the apostle which the Revolution had made him. It is of little consequence that his poetic vocation and art should have developed after the disappointment of his social hopes, and as a reaction against them. The essential initiative which he then takes in the order of art implies an inner certitude, a clearness of vision, which English poetry had been expecting for half a century, and which a writer could find only in the regenerating power of a great faith. In order to renew so thoroughly the inspiration and language of poetry, to destroy an imperious tradition and to break a spell, the utmost moral courage was required. Blake had possessed this courage, which he owed to his mysticism; but he was not fully aware of what he did. Wordsworth has this knowledge, and the more certainly, as his literary reform is connected by a close analogy with his recent political zeal. It is impossible not to see that the doctrine of the *Lyrical Ballads* is an æsthetic application of sentimental democracy.

In this collection of verse, where the contribution of Wordsworth is much greater than that of Coleridge, and in the shorter poems of the following period (1798–1805), the new poetry presents itself under varying forms, but all animated by persisting intentions. One feels that it has been prepared by a painstaking effort of critical thought, upon which successive prefaces and the disquisitions of Coleridge (*Biographia Literaria*) have thrown a strong light. Both poets are above all concerned with psychology. Carrying to its utmost limit the preoccupation which is already to be recognised in the work of their predecessors, from Cowper to Blake, they deliberately make the human soul the centre of art. In a sense, classicism had exactly the same intention; it also found its favourite subject-matter in the study of the mind. But the perception of what appertains to consciousness becomes with the Romanticists a much more vital and supple process; and this more direct hold which the writer's self now possesses upon its own working, a hold due to the intuitive quality of an inner life that has been stimulated by the revival of imaginative emotion, constitutes the principle as well as the originality of a transformed literature. So predominant is this psychological curiosity, that Wordsworth—his own statements would bear witness to the fact—seems rather to be in search of truth than of poetry. Behind this scientific taste, however, there is revealed a deeper motive, the desire for such an experience as will be profitable to both feelings and conduct. The *Lyrical Ballads* and the poems of the same group are a series of moral analyses, of a rich intrinsic value, discreetly guided by an edifying and utilitarian purpose.

The occasion for these analytical studies is provided by the everyday life, not of the elegant and refined classes, but of the people, and above all of the peasants. Wordsworth's realism is a complex product in which, along with the desire for truth, a love of Nature and simplicity, and a reaction against false nobleness, commingle with a social faith in the dignity of the humblest lives. Here we recognise both his own memories of childhood, and the lasting influence of his Revolutionary years. This realism, as often happens, is therefore pregnant with a virtual idealism, and is only a concentrated method employed to strike out, through sober means, spiritual beauty from fresh sources. And not only is the rustic austerity of the subjects wholly lit up by the brilliancy which a meditative mind imparts to whatever it touches, but in addition a halo of strangeness and mystery comes to glorify it. In the obscure stirrings of consciousness is hidden a subtle artistic element, which the poet can turn to use for the most moving of effects. In accordance with the sharing of their common task, Wordsworth takes familiar reality as the object of his study, exalting it through the strength of a reflective sensibility; Coleridge chooses the supernatural as his theme, and sets out to invest it with the semblance of truth as with the power to appeal to our feelings. By these inverse methods, the two writers tend towards the same end, the intimate fusion of the real with the ideal; and the bond which unites these elements is here none other than the new perception of the possibilities of "wonderment" to be found in the simplest things—a discovery the germ of which Wordsworth owed to the inward concentration of his thought upon itself, and Coleridge to his philosophical meditations and, later, to German transcendentalism; but which also could have been encouraged by the example which the novels of Mrs. Radcliffe afforded of a supernaturalness that was of a wholly inner nature.

Thus the short tales of Wordsworth tend to stir up the emotions of a soul which opens itself freely to the mysterious reverberating echo of the simplest lessons of life. Suggestion is the real aim of this poetry, and the means it employs are at bottom of the same order as those which symbolism will utilise at a later date. In appearance, this poetry is summed up in an exact faithfulness to reality. With uncompromising bluntness in the *Lyrical Ballads*—a manner that tends to soften later—it throws up in a full light the meaner traits of a suffering humanity. Man is shown by it in the setting of Nature, in strict accordance with daily observation, and without a trace of exaggeration or embellishment. As it is deeply alive to Nature's influence upon man, there emanates from its brief and sober pictures a teaching of all the inexpressible lessons which the sky and the earth, the seasons and all living creatures, convey to a sensibility upright and sound enough to remain receptive. The very first poems of Wordsworth (*Descriptive Sketches*, etc.), had borne testimony to the wealth of his sensory notations; and from the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads* he draws upon these resources, which he uses with a severe self-command, for much more powerful effects.

Psychological intensity—the vibration of our consciousness in its contact with things—is a relative quantity, and one which depends in a large measure upon ourselves. The deeper the attention we bring to bear upon facts, the richer will be our feelings in connection with them; and it is to this depth of attention that Wordsworth would incite us. He constantly reminds us that nothing is indifferent to him who is able to see and feel. In the unlimited store of experience at his disposal, his choice, from a preference of the mind as well as of the heart, falls upon that in which the humblest humanity is laid bare; for the emotion which has its source in it is freer from all conventional alloy, and possesses at the same time a power of more moving appeal. His poems place themselves, and us, in a state of sensitive receptivity before the simple incidents of rural life. Meditation, tenderness, a philosophical and serious beauty, are born of the vast widening of the soul's horizon which is brought about by a moral shock which is in itself of no significance, but proceeds to grow and idealise itself. Never did poetry more nearly approach a character of pure spirituality. As for the properly sensual value of art, it has no place here.

Being thus a collection of those intense and chosen moods which the world stirs in an attentive mind, whose imagination and reflection work up the rough data of sensibility, the poetry of Wordsworth searched, as it were, after a suitable form in which to express itself. And such a form it found by instinct, but was unable at once to define. One must not interpret too literally the successive formulæ which Wordsworth puts forward for his poetic diction. The first goes beyond his thought; he never seriously believed that a poet's means of expression should coincide altogether with those of the most familiar speech. To him the *Lyrical Ballads* are little else than experiments, in which a new principle is applied with a vigour meant to remain exceptional. He has a very exact intuition of this principle, even if he gives it definite shape only by degrees. It is not to entirely identify the language of poetry with that of conversation among men of the people or of the middle class; but that one should put the language of every day, that is to say the living and real language, to contribution for such elements as are most fitting towards the artistic suggestion one has in view. What will these elements be? They will be of a kind which the sincere and direct ardour of the need of expression spontaneously turns to use. They are words of intense forcefulness, corresponding to intense states of consciousness; but their intensity is of a wholly inner character, so that their distinctive feature is simplicity. Herein lies the truth at the core of the doctrine. Thus the theory of style again joins up with the moral and social idealism, and with the mysticism of Nature; the elementary powers of being are subjacent, and therefore preferable, to the artificial products of intelligence; in every sense, it is through simplicity that one returns to actual depth.

The poetry of Wordsworth is based upon an effort to convey by simple means the impression of intensity. But the use of ordinary words does not suffice to create this impression; one thing more is necessary, namely, the deep-felt tone which reveals their hidden tension, and brings into play their power of virtual suggestion. Music is possessed of adequate means by which the proper tone may be indicated; Wordsworth makes up for them to a certain extent, thanks to the help of auxiliary devices: the presumption created by the choice of verse as a medium, the prestige of poetry, the rhythm, and the effect of pieces which shed light on one another, and thus afford the reader a clue. He has also to allow for certain turns and expressions of a revealing nature, which imply by their very irregularity a superior degree of emotional tension, and the effect of which is to throw the whole tenor of the style on to the plane of full-meant intention and subdued eloquence.

On the other hand, literary tradition offers a model to the innovators. In the Romanticism of Wordsworth and Coleridge there is the consciousness and the will of a return to national sources. The disease that is preying upon poetry is the artificiality of a language in which the external and explicit means of conveying intensity have been worn out by the deadening effect of custom, and have lost all their power of suggestion; so that they crush inspiration itself and paralyse all effort towards a renewal of art. To shake off these chains, to dare to employ the language of pure passion, that is to say, to seek the vigour of words only in the force of their emotional note, such a step will mean a return to the practice of the old masters. The terms they employed had not yet suffered from constant use; therefore they could be satisfied with a moderate degree of outward intensity; and their style, when compared with that of the eighteenth century at its close, is of a relatively simple quality, just as it is ever racy, frank, and spontaneous.

The cult of Chaucer, Spenser and Shakespeare is part and parcel of the faith animating the literary reform, of which the *Lyrical Ballads* are the symbol as much as the instrument. To the pages of these writers Wordsworth and Coleridge go in quest of materials for the making of a "permanent" style. The ballad was the most popular form of literature, and the most robust in its construction; since the appearance of Percy's collection, the Romantic ideal had crystallized round these themes and these rhythms, that are still pregnant with the old-time vigour of the English genius. And it is of his own free choice that Wordsworth links up his subtle, powerful and meditative evocation with their simple pathos.

The significance of his attempt transcends its artistic success, which is at best a partial one. Although unequal, and full of flaws, of lapses into the prosaic or into a tedious accuracy of statement, each time that the inner magnetism is broken, that a sufficiently intense radiation of spiritual energy no longer transfigures what is mediocre into something beautiful, his shorter poems of the best period undoubtedly possess a unique value, however mixed they may be. Among them are pure masterpieces, in which the tension of the style is delightfully relaxed; an ecstatic or divinely puerile spontaneousness, as in Blake, here replaces the effort of concentration; depth of feeling can no more be distinguished from a blithe spirit or from the most delicate simplicity. The effort of philosophical sincerity becomes idealised into lyricism. But whatever the charm of these effusions, it is chiefly through their boldness that they have been fruitful. They bring to a decisive realisation the revival towards which all the previous literary transition was tending; they adapt a new or renewed form to a novel inspiration. The direct influence of Wordsworth acts perceptibly on very few writers; but he had broken the spell of an antiquated tradition, and his work inaugurated the reign of liberty. England awoke to this fact, not indeed at once, but by degrees, and in the course of a generation. All the English poets of the nineteenth century are indirectly his heirs.

The poet in Wordsworth is not always bound up with the reformer. At times we find him escaping, so to speak, from the more narrow scope of his programme, not by way of an awkward literality, due to a momentary failing of emotion, but through a lyrical exuberance which carries his expression far above the level of ordinary life. His *Tintern Abbey,* his *Ode on Intimations of Immortality,* voice inner moods of so ardent and rare a quality that they isolate the poet from his average fellow-men, and give him a language that is in itself, and not only in isolated terms, superior to that of normal experience. In its extreme application, the theory of an impassioned simplicity terminates in explicit sublimity; and when once the soul is pitched in this key, the words which are naturally suitable are by no means simple words. But the expression is not conventional on that account. In these poems Wordsworth does not violate the true principle of his doctrine; he merely frees it from the accidental limits imposed upon it by a legitimate reaction against an opposite excess; and so, beyond the Romanticism that must of necessity triumph, he rediscovers the highest art in a perfect harmony of thought and form.

The greater part of *The Prelude,* and the finest passages of *The Excursion,* realise this harmony through a remarkable blending of poetry and doctrine. In a language compact and often technical, where Hartley's influence is perceptible, just as that of Milton reveals itself in the blank verse arranged in long paragraphs, we have the propounding of a whole philosophy, which tends to be drily argumentative, without actually becoming so. For through these pages wafts an invigorating freshness, coming for the most part from free Nature, the presence of which, be it gentle, calm, austere or grand, yet ever wholesome, bathes the very inspiration of Wordsworth.

To him Nature appears as a formative influence superior to any other, the educator of senses and mind alike, the sower in our hearts of the deep-laid seeds of our feelings and beliefs. It speaks to the child in the fleeting emotions of its early years, and stirs the young poet to an ecstasy, the glow of which illuminates all his work and the rest of his life. In our temperate climes, this Nature is a safe guide to wisdom and goodness; it is instinct with the irradiating presence of the divine; in his adoration of it, Wordsworth's creed is a mystical pantheism. Beside Nature, the concrete humanity of the humble, of those who live in contact with it, is a source of happy exaltation for the social philosophy of the poet; as also the enthusiasm for science, the intellectual religion of truth, which Wordsworth possesses without effort and without uneasiness, for he does not deem it possible that truth may be contrary to his moral optimism. Finally, a note of personal tenderness, an almost elegiac inclination to evoke the memories of his own childhood, makes *The Prelude* the most admirable record of a soul's progress towards the full possession of self, which is implied in the apostolate of a poetic calling. The acuteness of the analyses which Wordsworth has thus given of subtle facts, and clothed in a language now expressive, now more abstract, has been equalled only by the present-day study of the mind.

The second part of his career reveals an inspiration on the wane, a didactic purpose that grows too prominent, a petty concern for an orthodox fidelity to order. He has still moments of beautiful, grand utterance, as in his *Sonnets*, which rank among the most robust in the English language; he retains to the end his nobility of thought and of form. But all that is exceptionally original in him belongs to the period of his first maturity.

He is the psychological poet among all others; and by consciously shifting the domain of art into the realm of the implicit, he has prepared the way for the supreme enrichment of modern literature.

3. **Coleridge.**—Coleridge[1] possesses the most vigorous mind among the English Romanticists of the first generation; in some of his pieces, he is their most exquisite poet. But his work, his life and even his thought are marked by an unhappy fate, which prevented him from reaching complete self-fulfilment. His nervous energy was unable to cope with an intellectual and artistic ambition which in everything chose as its aim the greatest and the most exacting efforts. He scarcely carried through any of his undertakings. He became a slave to opium, and to a deep-set disease of his very personality, of which the former habit was as much the effect as the cause. Unlike Wordsworth, he never recovered his balance; and while he taught the moral courage which culminates in victory, it was with the sense of defeat.

The contrast is all the more striking, as at a decisive moment the two men were in close relationship with each other. Their development, until the time of their meeting, offers great analogies. Coleridge, like Wordsworth, went through a phase of Revolutionary ardour; his first poems, where we catch a partial glimpse of his temperament, do not as yet reveal the marvellous originality which welled up within him all at once. He begins by imitating the artificial style of the eighteenth century, and his themes are those of pre-Romanticism. The daring of a personal inspiration, and that of a fresh created language, come to him at the same time; and this is the hour when his social zeal, his hopes for mankind, freed from the hope of any immediate realisation, become transformed into a spiritual idealism. Wordsworth's influence contributes to this result; but Coleridge is indebted to no one but himself for the more philosophic and mystical character with which he invests their common doctrine.

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[1] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, born in 1772, in Devonshire, studied at Christ's Hospital and Cambridge; under Southey's influence he adopted revolutionary principles, and formed with his friend the scheme of a settlement on communistic and philosophical principles (or pantisocracy) in the New World. The instability of his nervous life, already evidenced by his erratic impulsions, led him to make a constant use of opium. His poetic vocation was stimulated by contact with Wordsworth, near whom he lived in the Southwest (1797–8), and after a sojourn in Germany (1798–9), in the Lake district. He had published *Poems on Various Subjects*, 1796, and several pieces, before collaborating in the *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798, in which his principal contribution was *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. He wrote in conjunction with Southey an unfinished historical drama, *The Fall of Robespierre*, 1794; a tragedy, *Osorio*, 1797, which he remodelled later (*Remorse*, 1813); translated *The Piccolomini* and *The Death of Wallenstein*, by Schiller (1799–1800). He stayed at Malta (1804–6), and after a long struggle, he began about 1816 to slowly free himself from opium. He again published collections of poems (*Christabel*, etc., 1816; *Sibylline Leaves*, 1817); but from now onwards it was prose which absorbed him (philosophy, criticism, religion, politics): *The Friend*, a periodical, 1809–10; *The Statesman's Manual*, 1816; *Biographia Literaria*, 1817; *Aids to Reflection*, 1825, etc. He died in 1834. His Lectures on Shakespeare, Milton, etc. (1808–19) were collected after his death. A volume of intimate notes was published in 1895 (*Anima Poetae*). *Poetical Works*, ed. by Dykes Campbell, 1894; ed. by E. H. Coleridge, 1912; *Selected Poems*, ed. by Keeling, 1910; *Biog. Lit.*, ed. by Shawcross, 1907; *Literary Criticism*, ed. by Mackail, 1908; *Letters*, ed. by E. H. Coleridge, 1895. See studies by Traill (English Men of Letters), 1884; Brandl (English translation, 1887); J. Aynard, (*C., la vie d'un poète*, 1907), biographical references or studies in Crabb Robinson, *Diary;* J. S. Mill, *Dissertations*, vol. i, 1859; Cestre, *Révolution Française et poètes anglais*, 1906; Haney, *Bibliography of S. T. C.*, 1903; A. A. Helmholtz, *The Indebtedness of S. T. C. to Aug. W. von Schlegel*, 1907; Dunstan, *The German Influence on Coleridge, Modern Language Review*, 1922–3.

He goes directly to the supernatural. The other parts of the programme of the *Lyrical Ballads* have not the same hold over him, although he has a large share in their development. At a later date, and without any reserve, he will criticize Wordsworth's theory of poetic language, and his practical application of it; being more of an analyst, he will perceive the exaggeration of his friend's formulæ, and will point out his happy inconsistencies. He himself is not at pains to seek simplicity by way of principle; it is already there in the purity of his form, the texture of which is without a flaw. Nothing more definitely conveys an impression of the inevitable word than the masterpieces of Coleridge, whether the quality of the style be conscious and laboured, as in *The Ancient Mariner,* or whether it would seem to closely follow an inner prompting, as in *Kubla Khan.*

Both poems are visions; in *Christabel* as in *The Three Graves,* reality plays an increasing part, but that of the invisible still remains paramount. The very centre of Coleridge's art lies in his faculty of evoking the mystery of things, and making it actual, widespread, and obsessing. Even better than Wordsworth, because his is the more powerful imagination, and with him the haunting sense of the inexpressible is keener, less subservient to a strong moral purpose, he knows how to handle that species of the supernatural whose essence is entirely psychological. His somewhat wavering metaphysics, made up, above all, of desire, and only borrowing the fragments of a system from the German disciples of Kant, is based upon an intuition of the essential unity existing between our spirit and the divine. To descend to the depth of our consciousness, is to discover the immanent being; in this way we are able to penetrate beyond the plane of appearance and sense; it is only in questioning ourselves that we can unravel the universe; the true, the only events are those of the soul, and the special domain of poetry is this inner theatre. Here will be staged the episodes and reactions which it narrates; and the feelings which it would arouse in us must be registered by our spiritual eyes. The supernatural element in *The Ancient Mariner* is a hallucination, the outcome of remorse; by the most sober of methods *Christabel* suggests the terror of a vague menace. The vivid intensity of effects in the first poem, their subtlety and diffusion through the whole atmosphere of the second, are equally the work of a very great artist.

Coleridge possesses as well a vein of intimate effusion, a homely, religious inspiration, and the direct utterance of emotional moods; besides descriptive pieces of a type already common, but which he stamps with new characteristics. In such works the landscape is interwoven with the feelings, in accordance with an irresistible association, the wholly subjective quality of which he himself perceives and points out with sad clear-sightedness (*Dejection, an Ode*). He reaps a richer harvest through the senses than Wordsworth; they invest his impressions of Nature with an extraordinary freshness and splendour, and at the same time with a shrewd, minute precision which reveals the analytical mind. The complex and original savour of his work is partly the result of this blending of keen intellectuality with the receptive emotionality of a lyric poet. Therefore the purest expressions of his genius possess an incomparable quality. But these supreme moments were of short duration. It would appear as though at an early stage the excessive ardour of his thought had dried up the poetic vein in him. The impoverished flow becomes intermittent, is broken and fragmentary, testifying more and more to a pathetic incapacity for any sustained inspiration.

An innovator in metre, he was not a great metrist; he scarcely put to profit his extreme keenness of perception, or the creative gift which he possessed in all he did; but he consciously formulated the return of English verse to the principle of accentuation which is most suitable to its spontaneous rhythms. *Christabel* is written in lines of four accents, where the number of syllables varies on a very large scale, the pattern of the melody swelling or subsiding with the needs of the musical suggestion; while the light, ample cadence of the anapæst is introduced with delicate felicity among the shorter measures. This example of judicious freedom is at the source of the vast development in prosody which accompanies the expansion of modern English lyricism.[1]

As a philosopher, Coleridge has also been a sower of germinal ideas. His indebtedness to German philosophy has probably been overrated. He became acquainted with it at a time when his moral personality had already been formed, and he never was thoroughly acquainted with it. The doctrine of Kant, interpreted inasmuch as it founded a new metaphysics, encouraged his own tendencies. He took up the distinction between understanding and reason, only to push it to conclusions very far removed from those of Kant. He borrowed from Schelling what in his intellectual absent-mindedness he failed to acknowledge. Taken as a whole, his work reveals a general parallelism with the intuitive, idealistic and historical movement of ideas which gives German Romanticism its essential character. But he himself declared that he was just as much the disciple of national tradition, and of Burke. He was not the master, but the immediate predecessor of Carlyle. John Stuart Mill saw in him the principal source of the reaction which an age animated with the will to believe, and basing its inner life upon the feeling of spiritual mystery, showed against the rationalism of mechanical explanations, and the extension of a scientific ideal to the things of the soul. Through the intermediary action of thinkers who were also believers—as F. D. Maurice—Coleridge's influence helped to nurture the decisive revival of idealism in the time of Carlyle, and in adjoining circles of thought.

Coleridge's fertile though discontinuous mind touched upon—and not in vain—many other subjects, such as religious philosophy, in which he attempted to establish Anglicanism upon a rational foundation; ethics, which he tried to recapture from the utilitarian system in vogue; politics, in which a passion for organic order and salutary authority leads him even further than Burke in his aversion to all progress, but where he, on the other hand, discerns certain vices born of a social individualism.

It is, however, in literary criticism that his achievement is the most lasting. No one before him in England had brought such mental breadth to the discussion of æsthetic values. His judgments are all permeated by a trend of thought that is strongly under the influence of great doctrinal preconceptions; even in this domain he is the metaphysician. The well-known differentiation between imagination and fancy, which Wordsworth interpreted after his own fashion, is a way to laying stress upon the creative activity of the mind, as opposed to the passive association of mental pictures; but for Coleridge it has a mystical significance. This feeling for the secret link existing between problems, together with this habit of intermingling, even perhaps of confounding them, by no means deprives him of a penetrating sharpness of vision on precise points. In *Biographia Literaria* certain intentions, as well as certain successes or failings of Wordsworth, are caught and illuminated to their depths; so searching is the light, that it is even cruel. His remarks on Shakespeare show a sound intuition of the profound unity of dramatic art. Accustomed as he is to reach to the heart of things, to find there the same vital impulse which animates his own thought, and to see this secret life produce what becomes the apparent world of the senses, Coleridge is thus able to discern with an unerring insight the paths along which a central impulse has radiated, so to speak, towards all the fundamental ideas, aspects and characteristics of a work.

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[1] See Saintsbury, *History of English Prosody*, vol. iii., 1910; H. D. Bateson, *The Rhythm of Christabel* (*Manchester Quarterly*), 1894; T. S. Omond, *English Metrists*, 1907.

4. **Southey.**—Competent critics were wont to class Southey[1] during his lifetime with Coleridge and Wordsworth. Since then, however, his fame has singularly waned. To-day he is the least read of the Lake poets. Almost the whole of his work is touched with the blight. It has lost its vitality, and there is no reason to expect that it will ever regain it.

The cause of this inherent weakness lies in the writer's own personality. He has well-defined aims, a doctrine, and a consciously sustained nobility of subjects and themes; but genius he lacks; his is only a very estimable talent, and is not always even that. He deceived certain people because he shared the theories and the effort of the new school of poetry. Of the revolutionary sins of his early youth, on the other hand, he repents with an even more reassuring prudence than that of his companions; to national sentiment, to the spirit of an age carried back by the instinct of self-preservation towards the traditional order of things, he gives more absolute pledges; and being less original, he has a greater appeal for the average taste of his time. He was made Poet Laureate long before Wordsworth. From the day when he found himself without the support of a group of writers, and lacking a political or social setting for his work, his own claims to recognition showed themselves to be inferior. He deserves to be remembered, but it would be vain to attempt to revive his glory.

His longer poems are imposing structures, erected by meritorious labour, in which despite the brilliancy of certain details there reigns a monotonous tedium. Their conception is false. Southey is still unconsciously subservient to the æsthetic purposes of the eighteenth century; and he writes, not from a genuine need for self-expression, but in order to fulfil the programme traced out, as it were, by an obligation of the mind. He commits to verse a vague, exotic mythology, the visions and customs of Arabia, Mexico, and India, and so deprives himself of the advantage of a real humanity. His imagination, moreover, obedient to moral discipline, is unable to bring to this phantasmagoria the freedom which alone could give it charm. A biblical or Christian background, sentimental and puritan preoccupations, find themselves strangely associated with the Oriental setting of the *Arabian Nights*. *Thalaba* is a vast epic allegory in which some beautiful episodes are enacted; *Kehama* is still more arid; the first part of *Madoc*, and above all *Roderick*, in which the surroundings and the subject make us feel more at home, and where the emotion is more sincere and natural, sustain well enough a tone which though austere is not without grandeur.

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[1] Robert Southey, born in 1774 at Bristol, studied at Westminster School, then at Oxford; was converted to revolutionary ideas at an early date and formed a friendship with Coleridge. He wrote a social drama, *Wat Tyler* (1794; published 1817), and an epic poem, *Joan of Arc*, 1795; published *Poems*, 1794, 1797. After his marriage, he paid two visits to Portugal, and, following several vain attempts to decide his calling, he settled down near Coleridge at Keswick, in the Lake district, leading a most regular life, full of hard literary work. Adopting conservatism (but of the active interventionist kind) he was appointed to the Laureateship in 1813. His works comprise poems: *Thalaba*, 1801; *Madoc*, 1805; *The Curse of Kehama*, 1810; *Roderick*, 1814; *A Vision of Judgment*, 1821; biographies: *Life of Nelson*, 1813; *Life of Wesley*, 1820; historical writings: *History of Brazil*, 1810-19; *History of the Peninsular War*, 1823–32; social and moral treatises (*Sir Thomas More*, 1829; *Essays*, 1832); translations; numerous articles for the *Quarterly Review*, etc. He edited Chatterton (1803), Kirke White, anthologies of the English poets, etc. Died in 1843. *Poems*, ed. by Fitzgerald, 1909; *Selected Poems*, ed. by Dowden, 1895; *Life of Nelson*, ed. by Butler, 1911. His letters were published by his son, 1849–50; selected letters, ed. by Fitzgerald, 1912. *Select Prose*, ed. by Zeitlin, 1916. See Dowden, *Southey* (English Men of Letters), 1874; J. Dennis, *R. Southey*, 1887; Cestre, *Révol. Franç. et poètes angl.*, 1906; Haller (*The Early Life of R. S., 1774–1803*), 1917.

Southey, like his friends, wished to acquire a pure and unadorned style; and in this he has achieved a fair measure of success. He aims at a simple sobriety of expression, at the moving appeal of elementary emotions. But he has not the powerful concentration of Wordsworth, the radiant force of his spiritual lyricism, nor Coleridge's thrill of the supernatural. His modest and realistic notations look naïve, while his precision is prosaic. Besides, he cannot rid himself of abstractions. In quest of prosodiacal novelty, and eager for an independence which to him appears as a kind of moral idealism, he writes *Thalaba* in a singularly jejune metre, a sort of cadenced prose with lines of very unequal length, the idea for which he borrowed from an obscure poet (Sayers), and which for a brief spell Shelley was to imitate. This form, no doubt, possesses great suppleness, but it lacks any vestige of art; the want of all perceptible regularity or symmetry stamps it with a wholly arbitrary character. *Kehama* adds rhyme to this scheme, but without permanence. After these unhappy attempts, we find a degree of comfort in *Roderick* and *Madoc,* where there is a frank return to blank verse of five beats.

The shorter poems, of occasional or official character, fall too often into a painful mediocrity, which nothing relieves, not even an adventurous and interesting error. The best are those which have demanded least effort, and where rapid inspiration has been most directly expressed. Special mention must be made of the ode, full of a burning hatred, in which Southey's patriotism pours itself forth in execrating tones against Imperial France; and chiefly of the ballads and tales in verse, where he displays an unsuspected gift of forcefulness and humour. Whether the vein be one of imaginative terror or of popular joviality, the language here shows a nervous strength which at times recalls Burns. These short pieces, by their themes as by their familiar and robust art, are related to the whole movement whose outcome is the *Lyrical Ballads;* to this Southey's receptive nature has added many and various influences—those of Scott, of the novelists of terror, of the German Romanticists—without the product losing in true originality. Widely quoted in anthologies, these ballads probably represent the only living part of his poetical output.

In his very copious prose, there is one outstanding book, which every cultured Englishman has read, namely, *The Life of Nelson,* a fortunate volume, inasmuch as most of its value is derived from a subject of extraordinary quality. The moral biography testifies to limited powers of penetration, and in outlining before Carlyle the cult of heroism, Southey infuses it too exclusively with the passion of nationality. But a great figure, a type of energy and ambition, is portrayed in all its striking distinctness; the almost undeflected development of its epic career is accurately traced; and the compact account of the many incidents in this life preserves all the interest of the most captivating tale of adventure.

5. The Poetry of Scott.—At first glance, one might be led into thinking that a similar fate had befallen the poems of Southey and those of Scott.[1]

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[1] Walter Scott, born in Edinburgh in 1771, the son of a lawyer, had his imagination fired from the earliest years by the traditions of Southern Scotland. He studied at the university of his native town and prepared for the Bar; but his literary vocation was revealed to him in the course of the rambles taken to collect legends and ballads. He learned German, translated the *Lenore* of Bürger (1795), the *Goetz* of Goethe (1799), collaborated in the *Tales of Wonder* of Lewis (1801): published a collection of popular poetry, *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border,* 1802–3; then original poems: *The Lay of the Last Minstrel,* 1805; *Marmion,* 1808; *The Lady of the Lake,* 1810; *The Vision of Don Roderick,* 1811; *Rokeby,* 1813; *The Bridal of Triermain,* 1813; *The Lord of the Isles,* 1815; *Harold the Dauntless,* 1817. After the publication of *Waverley,* 1814, he devoted all his attention to the novel; but he still composed numerous

The latter were very popular from the moment they appeared, being eclipsed only by Byron in the public favour; their immediate and complete success marks the first official triumph of the new school. Neglected, however, after 1815, by their author himself, who had found a vaster field of activity in the novel, and overshadowed by the daring efforts of the second generation of poets, they knew a gradual decline. At the present day, the general reader leaves them aside. But with unobtrusive modesty, they continue to live; and as this test of a whole century is probably decisive, everything points to a discreet survival.

They assuredly embody the intentions and influences of Romanticism; but they do not originate, as is the case with Southey's epics, in an intellectual and theoretical source; countless are the natural bonds linking them up with the Scottish soil, with a national past, with a wealth of memories and sentiments which the poet shares with his immediate compatriots, and which a spontaneous sympathy renders accessible to all British readers. The feudalism and mediæval customs revived by Scott are not part of a very distant past; the clan spirit, the rich local life of a people steeped in traditions still retain something of that age; therefore the effort of imagination demanded of the reader is neither so great nor so artificial as with other writers. *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* is definitely placed at the end of that belated transition which joins up the Middle Ages with modern times. The atmosphere of the poem is thus created by a direct intuition in which art and archæology commingle, blended by the fervour of a warm literary patriotism.

There is nothing, however, as yet of the atmosphere which belongs to the historical novels of Scott, with their humour, their colouring applied with a touch at once lavish and sure. The past is evoked in a spirit romantic before it is human. The choice of descriptive traits, the development of action and the characterization are a trifle conventional. A secret complacency on the part of the author tends to incline everything towards picturesqueness, pathos, mystery, and even terror, as Scott indeed retains a trace of his youthful enthusiasm for the thrill of the German ballads and for the school of the supernatural. His romanticism is a synthesis of all the elements which two generations have set free: imaginative emotion, the lure of the past, the taste for chivalry, a sentimental respect for warlike and religious customs, the love of Nature, all of which with Scott are strongly individualized through his close familiarity with the Scottish landscape and social life.

However, the dominant characteristic of these poems is to be found in their sobriety of tone. They are subservient to an essential discipline and measure. The descriptive vein is always strongly controlled; the pictures of nature, whether charming, delicate or powerful, are never luxuriant; tragedy with Scott never reaches the stage of horror, nor is the fanciful element ever developed at the expense of an implicit logic. A faint suggestion of irony hovers at times like a smile over the narrative. The style, with its ease and liquid movement, has remarkable clarity and a striking economy of means. The verse, supple and modelled on the undulating flow of the sentiment, is of a very rhythmic quality. Scott recognized his indebtedness to the model of fluid freedom offered by the *Christabel* of Coleridge; but he had too sure a touch not to be a born poet. Through all these traits, the indefinable atmosphere of simplicity, wholesomeness and truth which permeates these flights of the

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short poems (*Miscellaneous Poems*, 1820; *Poetry Contained in the Novels*, etc., *of the Auther of Waverley*, 1822, etc.). For the rest of his work see below, chap. ii. *Poetical Works*, ed. by Robertson, 1904; ed. by Lang, 1905; *Selections*, ed. by A. H. Thompson, 1922. See Veitch, *Feeling for Nature in Scottish Poetry*, 1887, vol. ii.; Morgan, *Scott and His Poetry*, 1913; Franke, *Der Stil in den epischen Dichtungen Scotts*, 1909; Sarrazin, *Poètes Mod. d'Angleterre*, 1884; Margraf, *Der Einfluss der deutschen Litt. auf die englische*, etc., 1901.

imagination, saving them from any extravagance, one can feel the presence of a very shrewd intellectuality. Scott is one of those semi-Classicists by temperament who leave room for the continuity of tradition at the very heart of Romanticism. He is too conservative by instinct to be a thorough revolutionary in any sphere whatsoever.

The persisting charm of his chivalric epics, their lasting hold upon us, thus arise from the fact that below what is but a passing fashion they link up with a balanced, normal art, which a fresh inspiration has revivified. Yet the close proximity of the novels will always do them harm, since they are too inferior to Scott's prose in the study and development of characters. Beside them, on the other hand, one must not forget the shorter poems—whose form is often that of the ballad—in which Scott has shown a more intense, at times outstanding gift of lyricism.[1]

To be consulted: Barstow, *Wordsworth's Theory of Poetic Diction*, 1917; Beatty, *W. Wordsworth, His Doctrine and Art*, etc., 1923; Beers, *History of English Romanticism in the 19th Century*, 1902; Brandes, *Die Hauptströmungen*, etc., vol. iv., 1876; English translation, 1905; Brandl, *Coleridge*, 1886; *Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. xi. chap. v. vi. viii.; vol. xii. chap. i.; Carré, *Goethe en Angleterre*, 1920; Cazamian, *L'Intuition panthéiste*, etc. (*Etudes de psychol. littér.*), 1913; Coleridge, *Biographia literaria*, ed. by Shawcross, 1907; idem. chaps. i.–iv., xiv.–xxii., and *Prefaces* of Wordsworth, ed. by Sampson, 1920; Cestre, *La Révolution Française et les Poètes Anglais*, 1906; Courthope, *History of English Poetry*, vol. vi., 1910; Elton, *Survey of English Literature*, 1780–1830; new edn., 1920; Hazlitt, *The Spirit of the Age*, 1825; Herford, *The Age of Wordsworth*, 1897; Legouis, *La Jeunesse de Wordsworth*, 1897; Lockhart, *Life of Scott*, 1837–8; new edn., 1903; W. L. Mathieson, *England in Transition*, 1789–1832, 1921; Neilson, *Essentials of Poetry*, 1912; Oliphant, *Liter. Histor. of England at the End of the 18th and the Beginning of the 19th Century*, 1882; Omond, *The Romantic Triumph*, 1900; Pierce, *Currents and Eddies in the English Romantic Generation*, 1919; De Quincey, *Reminiscences of the Lake Poets* (*Works*, ed. by Masson, 1889); G. R. Richardson, *A Neglected Aspect of the English Romantic Revolt*, 1915; Crabb Robinson, *Diary*, ed. by Sadler, 1869; idem, *Selections*, ed. by Morley, 1922; Saintsbury, *History of English Prosody*, 1906–10; Sarrazin, *La Renaissance de la poésie anglaise*, 1887; Smons, *The Romantic Movement in English Poetry*, 1909; Verrier, *Essai sur les principes de la métrique anglaise*, 1909–10; Dorothy Wordsworth, *Journal*, ed by Knight, 1897; Th. Watts-Dunton, *The Renascence of Wonder in Poetry* (*Chambers's Cyclop. of English Literature*, vol. iii.), 1903.

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[1] With this generation must be connected the delicate, intimate effusions of Charles Lamb, who was closely associated with the enthusiasm, theories and projects of Coleridge and his group. His best poems, with their nostalgic emotion, their penetrating simplicity, recall Blake and Wordsworth, but possess, at the same time, an original note. (For the prose work of Lamb, see below, chap. v.) *The Works in Prose and Verse of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed. by Hutchinson, 1908. And among poets of less personal significance, such as Charles Lloyd, there is a more distinct figure, Henry Kirke White, whose early death at 21 (1785–1806) took on a symbolic value for this Romantic age. *Remains*, ed. by Southey, 1807–22; *Poems*, etc., ed. by Drinkwater, 1908.

CHAPTER II

THE NOVEL

1. Walter Scott.—The poems of Scott belonged to the first generation of Romanticists. His novels,[1] in the order of chronology, belong to the second; but the spirit animating them is still that of the first. There is no indication of their author having been influenced by the change in matters political and intellectual about 1815; he retains his opinions, his temperament, and the natural bent of his imagination. His personality is henceforth too firmly moulded to alter, but develops with greater freedom in a field of wider horizon. While the poetry of this age enlists a great number of the most brilliant talents, Scott's supremacy in the novel is sovereign. For nearly twenty years, everything is eclipsed by his work.

His pages have kept an incomparable charm and youthfulness. Neither fashions nor the changes in taste have had any serious effect upon them. Whether appraised or not by enlightened opinion and the critics, they have remained truly popular, and seem almost entirely to have become part of the treasure of permanent literature, and been added to the fund itself of the national heritage.

It would be vain, however, to deny that the years have encroached upon this work. It is not all of an equal quality or resisting power; and it was not given the careful labour which alone assures perfection. It has, no doubt, the happy touch, the divine facility, the wealth of a creation of genius. One feels that it wells up from a natural source; it is the outcome of a full inspiration, that has been already prepared by the assimilative play of memory, the activity of thought, the continual exercising of the imagination during half a lifetime. Scott was intimately acquainted with the past of Scotland, which he had explored in documents, history and legend; he had lived through it again by calling it up in its original setting, and had given it the reality of concrete form by discovering its latent presence in the manners, traditions and language, in all the existing originality of a people. This unconscious preparation had been so long and full, that from the day when the novelist and not the poet put it to contribution for pictures of a more ample scope, it appeared to be inexhaustible. In it lies the deep value of these reconstructions of history, and by investing them with the gift of life, which it has rendered possible, it supplies them with the atmosphere of a rich and flavoured humanity. But Scott certainly allowed himself to be led away too much by the case of rapid invention; and probably it is to this cause that must be traced, along with the few lapses in form, some more internal flaws, which time has brought into prominence.

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[1] The prose work of Sir Walter Scott comprises novels: *Waverley*, 1814; *Guy Mannering*, 1815; *The Antiquary*, 1816; *Tales of My Landlord* (*Old Mortality*, 1816; *The Heart of Midlothian*, 1818; *The Bride of Lammermoor*, 1819); *Rob Roy*, 1818; *Ivanhoe*, 1820; *The Monastery*, 1820; *The Abbot*, 1820; *Kenilworth*, 1821; *The Pirate*, 1822; *The Fortunes of Nigel*, 1822; *Pevril of the Peak*, 1822; *Quentine Durward*, 1823; *St. Ronan's Well*, 1824; *Redgauntlet*, 1824; *Tales of the Crusades*, 1825; *Woodstock*, 1826; *Chronicles of the Canongate*, 1827–8; *Anne of Geierstein*, 1829; *Tales of My Landlord* (4th Series), 1832. These remained anonymous until almost the last of the series had been published, although the author's identity had been surmised. Their success made Scott a wealthy man, and he led a princely existence in his luxurious abode at Abbotsford; but owing to the failure of a publisher, he had to consecrate the last ten years of his life to an exhausting task. He died in 1832, leaving among other writings: *The Border Antiquities of England and Scotland*, 1814–17, and *Provincial Antiquities of Scotland*, 1819–26; *Lives of the Novelists* (Ballantyne's Novelists' Library), 1821–4; *Life of Napoleon Buonaparte*, 1827; *Tales of a Grandfather*, 1828–31; *History of Scotland*, 1829–30. He edited numerous texts, notably, *The Works of Dryden*, 1808; *The Works of Swift*, 1814. His *Journal* (1825–32) was published by Douglas, 1890; *Familiar Letters*, 1894. *The Waverley Novels*, Border Edn., A. Lang, 1892–4; Oxford Edn., 1912. Most of the novels have been edited (with notes, etc.) separately. See the numerous biographies (by Lockhart, 1837–8; Hutton, 1878; Yonge, 1888; Norgate, 1906, etc.). Studies by Saintsbury, 1897; Maigron (*Le Roman histor.*, etc., *essai sur l'influence de W. Scott*), 1898; Cross (*Develop. of English Novel*, 1899); Hudson, 1901; Lang, 1906; Wyndham, 1908; Elton (*Survey of English Lit.*, 1920); Stalker (*The Intimate Life of Sir W. S.*), 1921.

These are nearly all reducible to certain insufficiencies of the writer's art, to devices which are too easy. In the century which has followed, both the technique of the novel and the requirements of the reader have come to be modified; over and above the theories of the moment, a substantial agreement has been reached concerning some demands which might prove to be of a lasting character. One requires sober truth, an objective outlook upon things, or if the writer's fancy and sensibility become a law unto themselves, one is loath to let them enjoy an optimism which savours too much of banal convention to be interesting. Fiction plays too important a part in the novel of Scott, and especially the fiction which does not wish to be treated as such. No one save the specialist suffers from the liberties he takes with the historical detail. The conception of truth, with him, has not yet acquired that scrupulous exactitude which the whole activity of thought in the nineteenth century will impart to it. But the cordial good-naturedness which lends so much winning charm to his work cannot excuse the too easy complacency of his critical sense or artistic conscience. The author is too frequently butting in upon the story; the monologues of the characters, the set conversations of those who rise above the ordinary rank, lose all semblance of reality. The creation of atmosphere in the novels is brought about by a series of conjectures which too obviously reveal a common end. An æsthetic and moral Providence carries on the story, leading it towards a conclusion which flatters a sentimental and moral preconception no doubt quite worthy in itself, but from which it would seem that a more severe taste has gradually receded. The conventional treatment of the love themes, as of the characterization of the young heroes and heroines, is in keeping with the fanciful tone of the plots, at least in some of their parts. There is in this whole series of effects a perspective such as that of the theatre, allowable, no doubt, as soon as the treatment of truth is only summarily and superficially faithful, but here at variance with the deep and exacting spirit of accuracy that in every other respect animates the realistic imagination of Scott.

It must be recognized, however, that he benefits by the quality of his fault; his art has about it a genuine simplicity, an unpretentiousness, that are restful after the strained objectivity of recent schools. And such blemishes are of slight import; they set a date upon the art of Scott, without aging it. The only consequence is that the reader must more clearly and more consciously accept the part played by artifice, by one main fiction and by some derived postulates, in the production of an illusion which can in fact never be complete.

The essential point is that this illusion, in far the majority of cases, and if nothing intervenes to impair the normal elasticity of our sense of the real, is a wonderful success. Scott makes us live again in past centuries, and makes innumerable human beings of his invention visible, familiar and akin to ourselves; whether he entirely creates them, or recreates their souls and borrows their names from history. His work is one of the happiest attempts ever made to evoke what is no longer extant; it owes this triumph to the imaginative intuition which Romanticism had stimulated, but also to a psychological truth that is sufficiently deep, and to a grasp of man's nature that is broad enough, to satisfy needs of our minds more constant than a taste for purely historical truth.

The novels form unequal groups according to their themes, varying in number as in value. Scott loses his force as he wanders from the solid ground of contemporary reality, and from those features of it which are of a durable enough nature to be looked upon as ancient; it is through the present that he interprets and reconstructs the past. Therefore, the periods he chooses by preference are not very remote; his favourite domain stretches from the Reformation to the last civil struggles of the eighteenth century. He organizes his subjects round the great religious or political conflicts which during these two hundred years most seriously impair the moral unity of the Scottish people; and as the Romanticism of feeling and imagination is above all attracted by lost causes, it is to Puritanism and to the allegiance of the Jacobites that through the force of the tale the involuntary sympathies of the reader are often drawn; a certain proof of the remarkable impartiality of Scott, who as a Tory and a friend of order retained some kindly feelings for the Stuarts, but who reproved fanaticism without reserve. It was his desire to keep the scales even, to grant to all parties and men the same kindly interest, and here he was almost always successful.

The novels which transport us to England or the Continent, and abandon the opening years of the modern era for the Middle Ages, betray this effort more distinctly; they reach their aim less completely: yet they accomplish some very fine feats; although historians do not spare certain aspects of *Ivanhoe,* they praise the atmosphere of the work, while it is generally agreed that the light shed upon Louis XI. and his time by *Quentin Durward* is not to be disparaged. But still, when all is considered, there are no achievements in this kind which can come up to the scenes enacted in those lowland districts of Scotland, so beloved and cherished by Scott; and for example, to the episodes whose setting is the capital (*The Heart of Midlothian,* etc.). In the same way, the landscape is evoked throughout with a poetic freshness, which is devoid of all impassioned ardour or exuberance; the description of nature, within these limits, is more widely treated in Scott's prose than in his verse; but the stretches of heath, the peat-lands, the wild valleys of Scotland are more accurately, more forcefully depicted than the vast forests of feudal England.

Set thus in a framework of events that are in great part fictitious, but which our sense of truth approves, and standing out against a background of nature and manners which are sufficiently rich in detail to be convincing, picturesque enough to be attractive, and the authority of which is chiefly derived from a national and intimate feeling of sympathetic familiarity, Scott's personages win our full approbation; there is no resisting their vitality. They offer a complete range of characterization, from the most rapid sketches to the most carefully executed portraits; their abundance and diversity astonish us. Their physical being, and the salient peculiarities of their moral being, are what always determine them. At times the analysis goes further, probing to the depths, and aiming at the most individual shades; but Scott is not preoccupied with the psychology that penetrates; he does not seek for complicated tangles of the soul, and consequently hardly ever comes upon any; on occasion he will be easily satisfied indeed. In certain cases he has desired to make a more searching analysis of a character, and has done so; but as a rule he sums up at one stroke the personality which interests him, grasps it with a vigorous hold, and draws its physiognomy with a broad, firm touch; and having once animated it, he leaves it to radiate the life thus given it to the very end. In this way his characters do not change.

His most unforgettable creations are those of episodic or simple personages, who are devoid of all mystery, and who reveal themselves wholly to us in one flash. Despite the attraction of some impressive figures of rebels, ruined noblemen and chieftains, it is the ordinary people, such as peasants, shopkeepers, housewives and servants, who constitute, by virtue of the artistic relief and intensity of touch with which they are painted, his richest and most attractive gallery of portraits.

And this is because the humbler classes can best voice the humour of Scott. Higher up in the social scale, moral dignity imposes a restraint upon the freedom implied in the expression of that humour. It implies a realism of method, an openness in the display of originality, a conscious and discreet revelation of one's self, an art of apparent naïvety and secret roguishness, which scarcely harmonize with the circumspection and reserve of refined manners. In its very essence it savours of the people. It has its roots in a full sense of life, in the experience of all the illogicality which its complexity conceals, in an alert attention to all the perceptible elements through which the solution of its problems reveals itself, in a spontaneously concrete appreciation of the qualities and paradoxes of things.

This deep fertilizing force of the Scottish mind makes its presence felt in all Scott's creations; it is the sole support of whole scenes, episodes and characters, and is more or less intermingled with nearly all the other sources of interest. His pathos itself is rarely without an after-taste of it. Even the poet's thought elaborates and refines it, and makes it the spiritual aroma of his philosophy. This is the element which imparts to his work an all-pervading spirit of kindliness and light irony, and which tempers the satire with indulgence, the sympathy with amusement. At this degree of superior concentration, humour acts as a kind of twofold wisdom, blending, correcting, and especially relieving the one by means of the other, the bitterness of clear discernment and the sweetness of charity. This suppleness of a judgment which is ever conscious of what is relative becomes reflected in an expression intentionally transposed, which chooses indirect ways because the hearer derives an added pleasure from unravelling them, and because they better comply with the essential scepticism of a soul that refuses to be dogmatically absorbed in one set mode of feeling. Scott's humour has a ring of Scottish shrewdness and kindliness about it. This note is to be heard throughout his work, and lends a character of unity to the vast comedy of existence; it assumes a different key according to the environment, the age and the sex of the persons who are shown to us; but a stronger affinity gives it all its clearness and charm in the language of simple folks; and the dialect of Scotland, at various degrees of raciness and genuineness, is intimately associated with it in its effects of full-flavoured and sly rusticity.

The passages in which this dialect predominates offer special difficulty to the uninitiated reader; but this is easily overcome; and at once, one comes to prefer them. Here it is that the language of Scott enjoys all its advantages. Its easy manner harmonizes with a familiar form of speech. In other places, it has great merits, and lends itself freely to lively or sustained narration, to description, to pathos, to reflections of a moralizing nature; but it does not keep up all these tones with an equal felicity, or rather there are some among these tones which are not happy in themselves. The edifying reflections, and interventions on the part of the author, imply at times a slightly artificial dignity; one finds there, as it were, a vein of phraseology still permeated with the spirit of the eighteenth century, which impairs the otherwise sound quality of a simple, direct style.

On the whole, the superficial flaws in form do not detract in any way from the deep merits of the work. Scott has the genius of the narrator; but he has the corresponding talent no less, and his tale is carried on by a very supple and very steady art, which sets up, develops and works out to a final close, through a very varied series of moments, a symphonic composition of sovereign breadth. Incidents, pauses, picturesque evocations, and dialogues, are interwoven with an instinctive, sure sense of measure; and the semblance of reality which characterizes the various exchanges of talk, especially in the popular scenes, nearly always succeeds in at once convincing us.

The novel of Scott represents the triumph of Romanticism in the imaginative re-creation of the past, associated with all the diverse emotions which the tragic or comic drama of life can awaken. It therefore takes the place of the theatre, in which the literature of this period has produced no masterpieces. Certain of the inner tendencies of Romanticism are here exploited to the limit, such as the liking for bygone ages, the luring of the reader's interest away from the present, the dramatic vision of life; it has even its touch of the supernatural and the mysterious (*The Bride of Lammermoor*, *Redgauntlet*, etc.). But by virtue of its humour, its sense of balance, the mental calm and self-possession it implies, it can also claim kinship with the psychological characteristics of Classicism. By bringing Romanticism so near to the real and complete life of every day as to confound the one with the other, even if that life be a vanished and miraculously restored one, Scott has given Romanticism an average and normal value, a soundness, an immunity from any feverishness, that it does not possess even in the poetry of a Wordsworth.

2. Realism; Adventure and Terror in the Novel.—Despite the illusion created by its superiority, Scott's work in the novel is not isolated, cut off from that of his contemporaries. He recognized his indebtedness to the Irish scenes of Miss Edgeworth.[1] Amongst his numerous and mediocre imitators, one should make mention of Galt,[2] who in the course of an uncertain career had himself conceived before Scott the idea of exploiting the picturesqueness of Scottish life, but to whom the *Waverley novels* came as an encouragement and example. His best studies are confined to ordinary and familiar aspects of life; and by freeing this new form of literature from all the historical elements of Romanticism, they turn it in the direction of a minute, humorous and tenderly inspired realism.

Among the diverse elements brought together in the work of Scott, it is indeed the realism which undoubtedly, after the history, proves the greatest force of attraction. Even in the success of imaginative fiction, literature retains its appreciation of concrete reality; and the distinctive feature of the romantic novel, as a whole, lies in the boldness with which it adds new provinces to reality. The popularity of a Hook[3] is due to the fact that he resolutely brings a democratic and modern spirit to bear upon his atmosphere and subject-matter. Marryat[4] revives the tradition of Sterne and Smollett; to the lively interest of his tale he adds a rich vein of humour, and by his painting of sea-faring folks and their life he has conquered a field in which he remains

[1] See above, Book IV. chap. vi. sect. 2; and the Preface to the *Waverley Novels*, edn. 1829.

[2] John Galt, 1779–1839, born in the Southwest of Scotland, led an eventful life and produced a very large number of diverse works. *The Annals of the Parish* was written before *Waverley*, but remained unpublished until 1821. See also *The Ayrshire Legatees*, 1821; *The Entail*, 1823. Similarly Susan Ferrier (1782–1854) wrote her first novel before reading those of Scott, but was one of the latter's literary followers (*Marriage*, 1818; *The Inheritance*, 1824; *Destiny*, 1831). With Croly, James, Ainsworth, Scott's influence is continued after 1830.

[3] Theodore Hook, 1788–1841, dramatist, improvisator, etc., published nine volumes of short stories, *Sayings and Doings*, 1824–8; numerous novels, among which *Jack Brag*, 1837.

[4] Frederick Marryat, 1792–1848, after a career as naval officer, began with *Frank Mildmay* (1829) a long series of sea novels, among which *Peter Simple*, 1834; *Midshipman Easy*, 1836, etc. See *Life and Letters*, 1872; study by Hannay, 1889.

one of the masters. Miss Mitford,[1] in her charming studies of village customs, her landscape descriptions, as exact as they are poetic, announces both the *Cranford* of Mrs. Gaskell and the work of Richard Jefferies. Lastly, the psychological realism of Jane Austen is handled with a much less delicate touch, and with some worldliness, but not without force, by Mrs. Gore.[2]

Meanwhile, the most characteristic, though not the most brilliant, type of the romantic novel, the model of which had been supplied by Mrs. Radcliffe and Lewis, continues to prosper. The supernatural with all its terror is still popular. This branch of literature, very fertile in itself but poor artistically, reaches one of the culminating points in its development with the *Melmoth* of Maturin,[3] a work of striking intensity. The *Frankenstein* of Mrs. Shelley[4] rises above the mere search after the common thrill of fear; here terror is idealized by being fused with the scientific and philosophical anguish of thought. Through this intermediary we understand the link which exists between this ardour of sensitive imagination, and the cult of the emotions, common to the great lyrical poets of the period. Just as Southey, Coleridge and Scott had all contributed to the collective stimulation which gave us the *Tales of Terror* by Lewis (1801), we find in Mrs. Shelley's fiction the passionate curiosity as to what lies beyond, the preoccupied interest in the marvellous and the morbid, which entered into Byron's and Shelley's daily life during their sojourn in Switzerland (1816).

To be consulted: Birkhead, *The Tale of Terror,* 1921; *Cambridge Hist. of English Literature,* vol. xi. chap. xiii.; vol. xii. chaps. i. and xvi.; Cross *Development of English Novel,* 1899; Elton, *Survey of English Liter.,* 1780–1830, 1920; Killen, *Le Roman terrifiant,* etc., 1915; Lockhart, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir W. Scott,* etc., new edn., 1903; Maigron, *Le Roman historique à l'époque romantique,* 1898; Olcott, *The Country of Sir W. Scott,* 1913; Scarborough, *The Supernatural in Mod. English Fiction,* 1917; Veitch, *History and Poetry of the Scottish Border,* 2nd edn., 1893.

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[1] Mary Russell Mitford, 1787–1855, wrote for the stage with creditable success; but it is to her simple, fresh sketches of provincial life (*Our Village, Sketches of Rural Character and Scenery,* 1819–32), that she owes her privileged place in English hearts. In her descriptions of nature there is a strong local colouring, and the current of regional literature in the 19th century has one of its sources in her work, as in that of Scott or Galt. See her *Recollections of a Literary Life,* 1852; L'Estrange, *The Friendships of M. R. Mitford,* etc., 1882; the study by C. Hill (*M. R. M. and Her Surroundings*), 1920.

[2] C. G. R. Gore, 1799–1861; *Mothers and Daughters,* 1831; *Mrs. Armytage,* 1836.

[3] Ch. Robt. Maturin, 1782–1824; *The Fatal Revenge,* 1807; *Melmoth the Wanderer,* 1820; For his influence in France, see Ch. Bonnier, *Milieux d'Art,* 1910; A. M. Killen, *Le Roman terrifiant,* etc., 1915.

[4] Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, daughter of Godwin, 1797–1851; *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus,* 1817; *The Last Man,* 1826.

CHAPTER III

INTELLECTUALISM AND POLITICAL LITERATURE

1. **Romanticism and Intellectualism.**—The Romantic period is not simple and single in its tendencies. It is traversed by a strong current of intellectualism which continues the rational thought of the eighteenth century, and joins up with the scientific and critical age into which England gradually enters after 1830. Nothing could be less Romantic, in all essential respects, than the philosophy of this epoch, as it is to be found in the works of the philosophers.

This psychological opposition between the doctrines and the sensibilities would be abnormal, if it were as complete in fact as it seems to be at first sight. But a precise study of the period solves this paradox to a very large extent. From 1800 to 1830, the highest grade of original literature remains at a moral pitch at which the average mind can only live in exceptional moments. The Romanticism of the poets is not out of harmony with the general attitude of minds; there is in these, towards an extreme intensity of imaginative emotion, a particular readiness and complacency, resulting from the long preparation represented by a half-century of avowed sentimentalism. This complacency remains passive, and does not broaden out into practical sympathy and imitation. The history of manners no doubt reveals at that time a superficial and fashionable form of exaltation, openly practised, together with acts which conform with the moral rules of Romanticism; but such realization is rare, and only concerns certain circles, certain ages, and very limited human groups.

The literature which triumphs, and produces the richest fruits, finds itself through its very effort outside the habitual conditions of moral balance. It corresponds with the current phase of the psychological rhythm, but can do so only by outdistancing it. It allows for a certain reserve, a conscious difference, even in those people whose complicity makes its own success possible; and thus such minds, in other respects, can tolerate moral attitudes and movements of ideas which diverge from or are opposed to the prevailing ones. The character of the period is too strongly marked in one direction, by its principal element, not to be incompatible with a simple unity; from its intrinsic nature it must be manifold and diverse.

On the other hand, a moral synthesis in the opposite direction, or one that is very clearly distinct, is formed or rather develops under the stress of circumstances. It is by no means new; it carries on a tradition of some standing: that of classicism and rational philosophy as we have them in the eighteenth century. But economic and social forces enter more than ever into co-operation with it. Until about the year 1815, the pressure of the industrial classes and of commercial interests is held in check, without being annulled, by the conservative influences let loose in the struggle with France. Even then, and despite political disturbances, the nation does not cease to grow richer, while the new middle class pursues in secret its trend towards power. After 1815, its impatience to attain power knows no bounds, and breaks away on all sides.

Such is the main impulse which gathers, so to speak, round itself all analogous temperaments and tendencies, and which gives the features of this age so strong a trait of rational individualism. This movement is individualistic, in that economic activity has no end beyond the welfare of the individual, and also because it encounters on its way, as irritating obstacles, the inherited rules and customs of the governments of the past, founded on authority. It is rational, first, because in destroying the moral ties as well as the solidarity between men, it cannot claim to do so out of sentiment, but must seek justification in a clear notion of realities; secondly, because the practice of commerce and industry, by focussing all attention upon the reckoning of forces and tangible results, inclines the mind towards a lucid and positive perception, either of the facts, or of the laws which go to explain them.

Mere chance cannot explain the fact that utilitarian philosophy has largely recruited its disciples from the ranks of the business and moneyed middle class. From the day when this philosophy, which was originally disinterested, took the form of a programme of action, it felt the influence of the converging interests which bound up its cause with that of the bourgeoisie. The alliance thus formed enabled it to actualize its theories to a great extent, but at the same time somewhat narrowed its horizon.

With the advent of the second generation of Romanticists, the separation between rational doctrines and literature proper becomes greatly reduced. In its general trend, utilitarian thought is liberal and democratic; it is therefore on a parallel plane with the revolt of the great writers against the order imposed by society upon the soul's desires. Of a contrary psychological nature, but analogous in its political tendency, it finds itself confirming, at a distance, the effort of the rebellious artists in literature; and certain affinities begin to reveal themselves between the theorists and the poets. These partial and momentary similarities allow the general spirit of opposition to subsist; everything considered, Bentham, Malthus, Ricardo and James Mill form the most striking contrast with Keats and Shelley, no less than with Coleridge and Wordsworth. Their success, their typical and representative value, testify to the presence of a deep-rooted duality in the very texture of the needs and moral tendencies which go to constitute this age.

2. The Utilitarians.—There are several degrees in the scale of liberal and utilitarian intellectualism. In its original form, with the philosophers, the doctrine is concentrated, strongly rational, and offers the aspect of a well connected system, which embraces the whole field of moral and social life. In the next stage, with the popularizers and publicists, temperaments that are different stamp it with another character.

The pure theorists are not artists, and hardly deserve the name of writers. Yet they occupy too important a place in the history of ideas, for the historian of literature to overlook them. They have each his individual traits, which are not lacking in relief. So naturally do their theses link up one with another, that in a very brief summary there is a temptation to merge them together. It is necessary, however, to note the contribution of each, and to picture them in their real relationship.

Born in 1748, Bentham[1] is a survivor of the eighteenth century; while his mind has been moulded according to the rules of law, he reacts strongly against the juridical submission to facts and circumstances. He brings into the realm of legislation and politics a fearless intellectuality, deducting from simple, clearly formulated principles the logical organization of social welfare. He is the first of the "philosophical radicals." His early writings are lively and sharp; along with a reflective turn of mind, with self-control, and with a firm resolve to let analysis cut through all complexes, one can feel in them a still very close approximation to reality, the sense of the concrete, a shrewdness of moral perception. At a later date, the constant tension of an intellect that is absorbed by the theoretical application of ideas to things has a withering influence upon the mind, and divests the style of all inherent quality; the language tends to become nothing else than a kind of algebra. Bentham is an indefatigable writer, and leaves to his disciples—Dumont and Bowring—the care of revising, publishing and translating his works. Cosmopolitan in his tastes and culture, he sometimes writes himself in French. He is the master, the venerated centre of a group of initiated followers; his influence makes itself felt indirectly, but so great is its radiating force, that democratic England of the nineteenth century bears its recognizable stamp, and that it can be traced very far abroad.

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[1] Jeremy Bentham, 1748–1832, son of an attorney, studied at Oxford, was destined for the Bar, but devoted his whole life to thought. A moralist, the theorist of penal and political law, he published *Letters on Usury*, 1787; *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, 1789; *The Panopticon*, 1791; *A Plea for the Constitution*, 1803; *Papers upon Codification and Public Instruction*, 1817; *The Book of Fallacies*, 1824, etc. On the other hand Dumont published in French from his manuscript, the *Traité de Législation civile et pénale*, 1802, the *Théorie des Peines et Récompenses*, 1811, etc. He left numerous manuscripts, in part unpublished. Bowring published his *Deontology, or Science of Morality*, 1834; retranslated the French version of Dumont, and brought out an edition of the *Works* in 11 volumes (1838–43). See Atkinson, *Bentham*, 1905.

Beside this austere but benignant sage, Malthus[1] appears as the unbending, almost fanatical apostle. Some people associate with his name the merit, and many others the hateful work, of having unflinchingly proclaimed the cruel truth of the "principle of population." His intellectual passion for the exact science of human development conceals a generosity of feeling, a soul that is essentially normal and sound; but the general public views moral matters in the simplest of lights, and from now onwards begins the legend of the unnatural aridness of utilitarian thinkers. In an age of Romanticism, Malthus represents the resolute objectivity of mind, a realistic submission to the physical conditions of existence, which contradicts both the unlimited hopes of the prophets of Reason, such as Godwin, and the inspired flights of intuition with the enthusiasts of fraternal love, such as Shelley. He is indeed at the opposite pole of psychological life. . . .

Ricardo[2] shares with Malthus the admiration or aversion of the multitude; he gives liberal economy its most doctrinal form, and lays stress upon the irreconcilable conflict between a science which studies the mutual compensation of egoisms, and the emotions associated by simple-minded or sentimental beings with the theme of an improvement in the common lot. As a financier, he directs the reckoning up of opposing forces towards the abstract rigour of a kind of social mathematics. He is responsible for the classical theory of rent; and socialism will borrow from him the thesis of the "iron law" which controls wages. His book, tense, full, and difficult to read, was for a long time the highest authority in its field.

James Mill[3] bridges the gap between the pure theorists and the men of action. Of a vigorous creative intellect, he takes up again the theses of Bentham and Ricardo, leaving the mark of his personality upon them. A psychologist, a moralist and an economist, he conceives on broad lines and under all its aspects the problem of the political reorganization of England; and through the forceful influence which he exercises upon friends or disciples, he transforms utilitarianism into an active doctrine. Around him are grouped the "philosophical radicals." No one better represents the effort made by English thought, in these opening years of the nineteenth century, to reduce the irrational element in the life of the individual or of the nation.

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[1] Thomas Robert Malthus, 1766–1834, of gentry stock, an Anglican clergyman, published in 1798, and anonymously, the *Essay on the Principle of Population;* revised and augmented edn., 1803. As professor of Political Economy and History in Haileybury College, he published *An Inquiry into the Nature and Progress of Rent,* 1815; *Principles of Political Economy,* 1820. See studies by Bonar (1885); G. de Molinari, 1889.

[2] David Ricardo, 1772–1823, son of a Jewish broker of Dutch origin, himself a broker, then a property owner in the country and member of Parliament; *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation,* 1817.

[3] James Mill, 1773–1836, born in Scotland, son of a shoemaker, had in view a church career, then settled in London (1802) and lived by his pen, or by the functions with which the East India Company entrusted him. *History of British India,* 1817-18; *Elements of Political Economy,* 1821; *Analysis of the Human Mind,* 1829. See biography by Bain, 1882; and the *Autobiography* by his son John Stuart Mill. For the latter, see below, Book VI. chap. ii.

Utilitarianism is the name applied to the ideas of these men, in their whole range; but the ethics of utility are only a part of the system, and not indeed the main part. The latter themselves derive from the extension to problems of conduct, as to all others, of a method borrowed from mathematics and physics. The desire and the hope of making the various provinces of reality one, through a common mode of explanation, would of course rise in minds that were wholly won over by the prestige of mechanical solutions. Intelligence being unable to conceive of a more perfect or more legitimate device, in order to embrace the whole universe of mind, than to resolve it into the simple elements of the physical world, the English utilitarians set about the construction of an imposing edifice, in which psychology, ethics, politics and economy are to be deduced from a calculable interplay of elementary forces.

The theory of the association of ideas thus yields up the secret of its success. It represents the first thoroughgoing application of physics to the world of consciousness. Through it all the operations of mind have been reduced to various combinations of sensations and images. The transition from this psychology of association to the ethics of utility is easy and immediate. Desires set up in men's souls the competition of forces that are unequal, either from the quantitative point of view only, or at the same time by their quality, as the improved form of the doctrine would have it; with or without the intervention of an additional influence—the independent appreciation of an inner tact—desires are compounded among themselves, and the greater attraction of the most solid or the most justifiable inclination raises it to the status of a duty. The "computation of pleasures" is therefore a legitimate formula: it is indeed a question of arithmetical values. What is to the advantage of others comes as a pure source of enjoyment to souls of natural generosity; and thus altruism is an outcome of egoism.

The laws governing social life will be deduced in an equally easy way from one single principle. Priestley and Beccaria have provided Bentham with a maxim so obvious in itself and so powerfully suggestive, that his mind has received, as it were, the shock of a revelation: the greatest happiness of the greatest number, such shall be, and indeed must be, the guiding rule of a well-ordered government. The legislation of States, the régime of power, the penal code, the exercise of public authority, shall be revised according to the exigencies of this sovereign end in view. The precedents, the privileges, the established interests, all the already traditional elements of English political empiricism, will have to submit to a daring scheme of reform, which, without losing the sense of what is possible, will know how to will and how to dare. The philosophical radicals set to work with determination along the lines which lead to an effective democracy.

The science of economics pursues the same ideal. In a perfect society, relieved from all that might impede the activity of any one member, the greatest possible amount of wealth springs from the free choice made by individual aptitudes, from a division of labour carried to its furthest limit, as well as from the effective functioning of a sort of automatic regulator—the law of supply and demand—which always directs production towards the most necessary objects. Competition is therefore the deep incentive to progress, and the eager pursuit of his own interests is the best way for the citizen to serve the community. Meanwhile the possession of lands of unequal fertility gives rise to a supplementary benefit called rent, to the profit of privileged owners, and in comparison with the income from the land which only brings in what has been expended upon it; in this way capital is formed, and the classes come into being—some of them reaping a reward from their ownership, and others from their labour; a more just distribution of wealth is not to be thought of. The wage-earners will compete among themselves in the labour market, and their salary will tend toward the limit compatible with the maintenance of life. Finally, with population increasing in geometrical, and foodstuffs in arithmetical ratio, the overcrowded earth would in one century be the scene of the most atrocious famine, if disease, poverty and war, acting in co-operation with deliberate foresight, did not restrict the generations of mankind. Ricardo and Malthus stamp economy with the character of an austere and stoical science, which is beneficial because it has the courage to show up the inexorable conditions of physical and social life.

These doctrines have a very wide and deep influence. They prepare the measures of a thought-out adaptation through which the Victorian order of things is gradually organized in a more modern spirit, and on the basis of a relative democracy. The Radicals of 1820 are unable to put their programme entirely into practice, and they obtain only a partial satisfaction; the Chartists of 1848 will take up their formulæ, and struggle in vain to impose them. But the former, nevertheless, set up a trend of progress which gradually exhausts its impulse in the course of the century, and which establishes at the very core of Victorian balance a secret faculty of movement. From 1820 to 1835, their influence betrays itself in striking results, which stand out as landmarks in the political development of England: the cancelling of the laws against the workers' combinations (1824), the legal emancipation of Catholics (1829), the foundation of London University (1829), the first extension of the electoral franchise (1832), a reform in municipal administration (1834), the humanizing of the penal code. These measures are passed through Parliament, before or after the Reform Act of 1832, by a minority of doctrinaire politicians, leavening the mass of what was formerly the Whig, and at that date becomes the Liberal party; and these politicians are themselves directly inspired by Bentham and James Mill.

3. Sydney Smith; the Reviews.—The whole country, however, was being won over to their cause, or at least sufficiently impressed by their arguments to accept those opportune concessions in which is seen the triumph of the English instinct of conservatism. The diffusion of their theses, the appeal to public opinion, are the work of men of a rather different stamp, and who are much closer to the average British type of mind.

With Sydney Smith,[1] action is still connected with ideas. He is an educated man, of intellectual tastes; a cleric, he preaches, and treats of philosophy and morality with a measure of success. But the doctrinaire element is already wanting in his personality. We find in him the political instincts of the Whig tradition taking more definite shape and becoming more intensified; yet he remains a Whig, in all that the word implies: an essential moderation, a concrete grasp of problems, an individualistic liberalism.

Within these limits, his clear understanding can work all the more surely. *Peter Plymley's Letters* are a model of skilful and effective persuasion. A generous thesis, its points pressed home as much by virtue of reason as by a kindliness of heart, is presented in such a way as to disarm prejudice, and appeal to the common sense and sympathy of the reader. Religious intolerance, the author says, is a survival from another age. Let us rid ourselves of all antiquated mistrust and hatred; the Catholics, the Irish are entitled to the freedom enjoyed by all; the very principles of Protestantism forbid that one should withhold this from them. And justice, he points out, will be the most able policy in unsettled times. For nations as for individuals, prudence is the best assurance of success. This defence becomes at times animated and spirited, but most often is controlled and displays an arch humour, and a realistic verve. It is the art of Swift, tempered and less strained, without the harsh vigour of a unique genius. Thus presented, there was a chance of success for the cause of which the utilitarians were the abstract defenders.

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[1] Sydney Smith, 1771–1845, Anglican minister, was connected with the foundation of the *Edinburgh Review* (1802); he published numerous articles and political treatises, notably, *Letters on the Subject of the Catholics, to my Brother Abraham, who Lives in the Country, by Peter Plymley* (1807). See Chevrillon, *S. Smith et la renaissance des idées libérales en Angleterre*, etc., 1894.

The great reviews of the modern type come into being at the same time; and henceforth play a conspicuous part in the moulding of literary opinion, while they exercise a political influence that is scarcely less important. Their effort, as a whole, has behind it one fixed and common idea: to satisfy the tastes of a cultured public, which is ever broadening; and to offer it, without causing its interest to flag or running counter to its prejudices, the mental stimulus required to give further definiteness and strength to its beliefs. Here we have a kind of intermediary degree between an independent polemic literature, and the press of to-day, which is too often incapable of any free reaction and which has to cater for its readers. British reviews have a doctrine, a general attitude, and support a party; but their anonymous articles leave a margin of liberty to their contributors; the authority they have acquired permits them to claim and possess a right of initiative, a moral autonomy; the personalities of editors, who are known to the public, add the final note to their individual characters; each represents at once a group of interests, a collective organ, and a single voice, to which the public gives ear, and which informs, instructs, advises and reprimands its audience.

These regular and permanent publications, while organizing opinion, provide writers with new facilities for essaying their talent, without running the risks, or incurring the expense, of publishing under their own name.

Originally, the reviews are organs of strife. Each has its own features. The *Edinburgh Review,* the first[1] to be founded, upholds the Liberal cause, has philosophic pretensions, but remains true to the Whig spirit. Its daring effort, wholly relative as it is, brings a rival into the field, the *Quarterly Review,*[2] which is out to defend the traditional orthodoxies. Opposed in politics, these two periodicals agree in condemning Lakist innovations in poetry; their doctrine is authoritative, their tone dogmatic; and the *Edinburgh* is not less violent in its defence of the sound principles of style, than the *Quarterly* in denouncing the enemies of Church and State. *Blackwood's Magazine*[3] engages in a still more vigorous offensive against the adversaries of order in art and society; and the *London Magazine* having widely opened up its columns to the Reformers, the editor of *Blackwood's* challenges and kills, in a duel, the editor of the *London*. . . . This is the climax of the struggle; polemical writing, from now onwards, without being less spirited, has less murderous results. By means of the *Westminster Review,*[4] the philosophical Radicals are able to gain a hearing, without rousing such passionate resentment. Incorporated in the national life, the reviews of the new style pursue henceforth their brilliant career, and supply the Victorian novel with its favourite mode of publication, by instalments.

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[1] In 1802 by Jeffrey, Sydney Smith, Brougham; a quarterly, its sales reached a total of nearly 14,000 copies in 1818.

[2] Founded, in 1809, in London, by Walter Scott, with the help of Canning, Ellis, Croker, Gifford; it reached the same sale as the *Edinburgh Review.*

[3] Founded, in Edinburgh, in 1817 by the publisher, Blackwood, and directed by Lockhart and Wilson; a monthly.

[4] Founded in 1824, directed by Bowring and James Mill.

4. **Cobbett.**— Cobbett[1] is a figure apart in the literary and political movement of his time. He is not a popularizer, but an ingenuous disciple, an inventor after his fashion. His opinions are purely instinctive; he has no well thought-out principles, is not a reasoner, and views problems in a concrete light; but there is a vigour in his direct hold upon reality, and his influence is derived from the robust realism of his outlook. Beginning as a Tory, he evolves towards a programme of aggressive liberalism, under the stress of experience. He has nothing in common with the doctrinaire thinkers, nor is he in sympathy with them. His writings reveal a background of traditional and agrarian sentiment; he is a democrat in the sense in which the patriarchal régime of Old England allocated a better and more stable recognition to the peasant, than did the new industrial order. The egoism of the wealthy classes brings a strong note of levelling aspiration into his writings; nevertheless, he fully sympathizes with an aristocracy that can understand its duties.

His work explains how for a time the action of the utilitarian philosophers was able to harmonize with the national temperament, and find an indirect support in the country people. The agricultural crisis, which from now onwards is a chronic fact, causes deep unrest among the rural classes; and to this Cobbett lends a voice that is popular and even vulgar, but endowed with a natural eloquence. Naïvely preoccupied with himself, he possesses all the charm of candid self-revelation. In a spontaneous prose, incapable of any logic or refinement, but wholesome and full of life, he narrates his *Rural Rides*, and with a kind of simple poetic felicity succeeds in calling up landscapes, as he depicts the manners of the people. His language is expressive, and even after a century has lost nothing of its freshness.

To be consulted: Albee, *History of English Utilitarianism*, 1902; *Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. xi. chaps. ii. iii.; vol. xii. chap. vi.; Chevrillon, *Sydney Smith*, etc., 1894; Elton, *Survey of English Literature*, 1780–1830, 1920; E. Halévy, *La Formation du Radicalisme philosophique*, 1901–4; idem, *Histoire du peuple anglais au XIXe siècle*, vol. i. ii. 1913–23; L. Stephen, *The English Utilitarians*, 1900; idem, *Hours in a Library*, vol. iii. new edn., 1907.

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[1] William Cobbett, born in 1762, the son of a Surrey farmer, was self-educated; as soldier, publicist in America, and in England, he founded the *Weekly Political Register*, 1802, which became the organ of popular Radicalism. Imprisoned for two years, and heavily fined, he retained the favour of a large public and combined the calling of agitator with that of an enthusiastic agriculturist; entered Parliament in 1832, died in 1835. His *Rural Rides*, taken from the *Political Register*, were collected in 1830; he left numerous writings, among which an *English Grammar*, 1817; *A History of the Reformation in England and Ireland*, etc. *Rural Rides*, selected extracts by Lobbau, 1908; *Selections*, ed. by A. M. D. Hughes, 1923. See biography by Melville (*Life and Letters of W. C., etc.*), 1913; studies by W. Hazlitt (*Table Talk*, vi.); Edw. Smith, 1878; Chevrillon, *Sydney Smith*, etc., 1894.

CHAPTER IV

THE SECOND GENERATION OF POETS

1. The Group and Its Surroundings.—Three poets of the first order, distinct from those of the Lake school, and coming appreciably after them, constitute yet another natural group. The affinities which unite them are of a different kind, acting rather as a centrifugal force in the exterior plane of their destinies, instead of effecting a visible convergence of their courses. Byron, Shelley and Keats set out in various directions upon life's highways, each animated by the same impatient ardour. Their roads, however, end by meeting in that Italy which at this date is the chosen land of revolutionary spirits as of free artists. Had they lived, Venetia or Umbria might perchance have been to them, at least for a time, a selected and common sojourn, a Lake district. . . .

Without actually constituting a school, these writers offer so many points of close resemblance that one cannot but view them together. They represent indeed a poetic generation—the second in Romanticism. And just as they coalesce together, they belong to a broader background of facts. Their unity is consolidated and confirmed in an intellectual and social movement. Born as they were either, like Byron, just at the eve of the French Revolution, or like Shelley and Keats shortly after, they are not directly affected by its commotion; but the revolutionary ideas, passionately denounced or, as in certain spheres, not less passionately embraced, are everywhere rife, and could not possibly have left them untouched. And now it comes about that the general situation in England, after having strongly opposed the progress of these doctrines, adds to their force of attraction. The resumption of the Liberal agitation after 1815, the progress of utilitarian philosophy, the continuing state of political unrest in Europe after twenty-five years of upheaval, and the preparation for what was to be the ordered era of the Victorians by way of an unrest which would appear destructive of order—such are the most apparent influences through which this new period favours the adhesion of young and ardent minds to the cause of progress. And at a first glance nothing seems more paradoxical than this hidden relationship which links up, so to speak, the democratic idealism of Shelley, the aristocratic individualism of Byron, and a state of social uncertainty, the most powerful cause of which is the secretly aggressive action of a middle class with a predominantly realistic outlook.

From the psychological point of view, which here again is the most significant, the second generation of poets also stand out against a background of relative complicity between their age and themselves. They mark the extreme degree reached by a phase of the moral rhythm; and they do not overstep the formula of this phase, even if they carry it to its limits. The particular intensity which the character of the period assumes in their pages even lends these writers a typical value, making their work in a sense representative. An inner need prompts the new literature to give free scope to all its possible effects. While already there is evidence of the corrective instinct, the searching after balance, the cycle opened up by the decisive victory of sentiment has not yet been traversed in its entirety. The exaltation of the faculty of feeling and imagination quickly subsided in the case of the Lake poets, being reconciled with the respect for an essential orthodoxy which re-established, even within the soul itself, the limits and restraining forces of prudence and faith. The logic of a revolt of passion against Reason has of necessity to lead it still further. This unlimited independence is expressed in diverse ways, through the free and rebellious element to be found in Byron's unmoral cynicism, in Shelley's ecstatic and humanitarian pantheism, as well as in the sensualism of Keats. Herein lies the germ of a moral anarchy, the full daring of which will hardly be roused until the close of the century. The new Romanticism which will come to disturb the closing years of the Victorian era will be the dauntless heir of that which had preceded it.

This liberation of the individual as regards all rules, and of emotion as regards a wisdom necessary to sound living, is indeed a diffuse tendency in other writers besides Byron, Keats and Shelley. One may say that with several of their contemporaries there is outlined an insurrection of repressed instincts; and that an after taste of decadence permeates with a perceptible savour the literary efforts, the aspirations and the favourite moods of certain groups or circles. The revival of the Romanticism of terror with Maturin[1] is distinguished by a conspicuous liberty towards the susceptibilities of conscience. That attitude in Byron which has called for the name of "Satanism" answers to a peculiar fashion, and finds its imitators. The members of the "Cockney school," outside of Keats, profess some disdain for the conventionality with which Puritanism veils all that touches upon love; the erotic theme, with Leigh Hunt and his friends, is treated with a readiness suggestive of a certain defiance, and is related to political radicalism. Thomas Moore, more moderate in his opinions, is just as free in his light verse. Hazlitt's *Liber Amoris* is a symptom of a new sincerity of outlook.[2] Indeed at the heart of this age there stirs an inclination to revolt against Christianity and all authoritative forms of discipline. But the rebellion of desire reveals itself for the most part indirectly; criticism of the official religion remains a private matter, since the everyday life of the people does not permit any free expression of opinion upon the subject. Shelley is expelled from Oxford for having written a tract on the "necessity of atheism"; even Byron prefers to voice his views in ironical language and by allusion. On the whole, the psychic revolt, which is represented by a Romanticism thus apparently freed from all inner restraints, transposes itself, and does not openly attack the solid pillars of the moral order; and this secret hesitation would point to the persistence of many repressions.

It could not be otherwise, if one takes into account the tone of the epoch. For, everything considered, England about 1820 is anything but revolutionary. While at this moment there are signs of a convergence between outstanding individuals and the average person of culture, such symptoms must not be exaggerated. The writers are already accentuating in a marked manner the claims of ordinary sensibilities, and this, no doubt, is an habitual fact; but among these writers themselves, the majority remain very far short of the bold and successful ventures which are the privilege of a few geniuses. Never has a group of very great poets been so clearly separated from the mass of general talent. One does not see, as in the days of the Renaissance, the gift of lyricism and the desire for intellectual adventure bursting forth on all sides and at the same moment. Among the contemporaries of Byron, Shelley and Keats, one looks in vain for men in whom the diapason of imaginative life is raised to the same degree.[3] Compared with them, their immediate rivals look, as it were, like semi-Romanticists; their tone is calmer and more normal. So that this trio forms a group of magnificent exceptions, not only by the height of their art, but by the intensity of their psychological character.

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[1] See above, chap. ii. sect. 2.

[2] For the group as a whole, see below, chap. v.

[3] There is much of the same spirit in Beddoes, and a little in Darley, Hood, etc., at a slightly later date. See below, Book VI. chap. iv. sect. 3.

Therefore it was long before public taste could adapt itself to their work; Byron, when once in the full possession of his powers, lost his native country and conquered Europe; throughout a whole generation, Keats and Shelley were neither recognized nor understood, save by an élite. Vital instinct in its fear erected against these rebellious geniuses a barrier which even sympathy could not break down. For, in pushing the virtual qualities of their epoch to a degree of realization that was too complete, they had overstepped the limits. The reaction in literary taste, the inverse oscillation of the moral rhythm, and the search for balance, are in a large measure accelerated by the direct effect of their work; already the coming of such changes is felt at their very time. If placed in their proper historical perspective, they appear, among other aspects, as forerunners, as isolated figures. It is only at a much later date, and towards the end of the century, that whole groups of poets and writers will live and feel and spontaneously create at a pitch equivalent to the mental tone of a Byron, a Keats and a Shelley.

2. **Byron.**—By the quality of his Romanticism, Byron[1] is the most accessible of these three poets to foreign readers; he was the first to influence Europe, and had the widest action upon literature. He it is who best represents in English literature the *mal du siècle,* probably the most common feature of international Romanticism. The will to health, the moral success of the Lake poets, to which Coleridge is only a relative exception, are here replaced by an unconcealed disease, the source of suffering and a motive for pride, which cannot, and indeed will not, be cured. A deep analogy thus affiliates Byron with the spiritual posterity of Rousseau—with the Goethe of *Werther,* the

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[1] George Gordon, of English origin through his father, and Scotch by his mother, born in London in 1788, was brought up in Scotland; inherited in 1798 the title of Lord Byron, and considerable wealth; studied at Harrow and Cambridge; published in 1807, after several essays, a volume of verse, *Hours of Idleness.* Arrogantly criticized in the *Edinburgh Review,* he replied with a sharp satire, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers,* 1809. Now famous, he travelled in Spain and in the East, and on his return published the first two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage,* 1812; *The Giaour, The Bride of Abydos,* 1813; *The Corsair, Lava,* 1814; *The Siege of Corinth, Parisina,* 1816. In 1816, after a year of married life, his wife left him for motives which have not yet been completely explained. Scandal, and the severity of public opinion, which caused a vague moral reprobation to crystallize round this wrong, made Byron decide to leave England (1816). He sojourned in Switzerland, settled in Venice, then in Ravenna. The influence of Italy and of the Countess Guiccioli showed itself in the choice of his subjects, the tone of his work and his political action. He published the third canto of *Childe Harold,* 1816, and the fourth, 1818; *The Prisoner of Chillon,* 1816; *Manfred,* 1817; *Beppo,* 1818; *Mazeppa,* 1819; began *Don Juan,* 1819–24, which he left unfinished; leaving out this poem—and *The Lament of Tasso,* 1817; *The Prophecy of Dante,* 1821; *The Island,* 1823—he then turned to drama: *Cain, Marino Faliero, Sardanapalus, The Two Foscari,* 1821; *Werner,* 1823; *Heaven and Earth,* 1824. He defended Pope and his school against Bowles, replied to an attack from Southey (*The Vision of Judgment,* 1822); sojourning at Pisa, then in Genoa, he was connected with the last episodes of Shelley's life (1822), and attempted a political collaboration with Leigh Hunt (*The Liberal,* 1822–3). After the failure of the Carbonari, he gave himself up to the cause of Greek independence, which he upheld morally, financially, and also in person (1823); he died at Missolonghi (April, 1824). *Works: Poetry,* ed. by E. H. Coleridge; *Letters and Journals,* ed. by Prothero, 1898–1904; *Poet. Works,* ed. by E. H. Coleridge, 1905; *Poems and Plays,* Everyman's Library, etc.; *Selections,* ed. by A. H. Thompson, 1920. See the biographies by Th. Moore, 1831; Galt, 1830; Noel, 1890; E. C. Mayne, 1892; M. Bellamy, 1924, etc.; and Medwin (*Conversations,* etc., 1824), Trelawny (*Recollections,* etc., 1858); the problem raised by H. Beecher Stowe (*Lady B. Vindicated,* 1870), taken up again by Lord Lovelace (*Astarte,* 1905) and Edgcumbe (*B., the Last Phase,* 1910), etc.; the studies by Swinburne (*Essays and Studies,* 1875), M. Arnold (*Essays in Criticism,* 2nd Series, 1888); G. Brandes (*Main Currents,* etc.; vol. iv.), Ackermann, 1901; Estève (*B. et le romantisme français,* 1907); Hoops, 1903; Koeppel, 1903; Nichol (English Men of Letters, 1880); Fuess (*Lord B. as a Satirist in Verse*), 1913.

Chateaubriand of *René*—making him in his turn one of the most active generators of a mental contagion that is freely spreading beyond the frontiers of nations.

Herein lies the dominant trait of his features. At the very centre of his being, there is an element of morbidity; the inner life built up on the full indulgence of emotion and desire reveals one of the current forms of its possible disintegration: the dispersion of the personality through the absence of an organic discipline among the motives and the acts. It would be hard to find a character of more energy than that of Byron; but he was never completely master of himself; his life and work offer us the picture of an essential duality. This wound, the pain of which he proudly parades throughout the world, is just the semi-pathological rupture of the tissue of tendencies, which has severed all connection between one part of himself and the other. Hence the seeming, and more than seeming, existence of a chronic insincerity, which intermingles with a sincerity that is very real and whole-hearted; hence errors and faults, the suffering born of these, and deeper than all regret, the intuition that these faults answer to the secret craving of a nature incapable of any peace, which finds no joy in them, but at the same time is unable to find it elsewhere. Byron definitively establishes in England the European type of the Romantic artist, whose art feeds on his very disease, who takes a voluptuous delight in self-reproach, and who weaves his remorse into a texture of beauty.

It would be wrong to say that his existence was one continual pose. The Fate which mapped out his destiny was only too real; and to this his bitterness, his pessimism, his irony bear sincere testimony. His divided soul was always able, on the one hand, to judge his acts, and on the other to judge his vain lucidity. This twofold play of instincts and impulses, this seeking after effects which comes from an intensity truly impassioned, this taste for cynicism which does not spare its own frankness—all have their most substantial unity in the imperious need of experience and of expression which governs all his being, and transmutes all his incurable contradictions into literature and poetry.

The logical bent of such a temperament leads it, if not to crime, at least to the serious violation of laws which it accepts in spite of itself but does not respect, as to the most precious source of that inner plenitude which could never be reaped from a docile subservience to mediocre rules; or, without necessitating an actual violation, to a half-real fiction, sufficient to create the thrill of reality, and to produce the dramatic situation of a challenge to the will of God and man. The moral life of Byron has its obscure spots, and a central mystery which he has himself taken pains to make conspicuous, just as much as he sought to render it still more impenetrable. That the solution to the problem should be found in incest is very probable; there is no doubt that he took a delight in rousing suspicions of the kind, and that his writings confirm and encourage them. Whether he really loved his half-sister, and actually looked upon such a wrong as beyond atonement, one cannot at the present time affirm; in any case the reality of the fault is of secondary importance. The main point is that Byron was guilty in his heart, and wanted to be thought guilty; and further no fact or symbol could be more consistent with that imperious craving for a greatness and a strangeness in crime, a desire which his pride, still more fiercely than that of Chateaubriand, cherished within itself.[1]

His divided nature, however, regained its self-mastery in creative activities. Art was for Byron the full and true life through which all his tendencies could work together in easy unity. The last demonstration of his haughty courage, and the circumstances of his death, show him also fully active, sure of himself and reconciled with his conscience. And all the moral unrest of his stormy career cannot dim the splendour of a personality so admirably vigorous and richly endowed. Now that he appears in his true perspective, and when one has ceased to admire or disparage out of mere obedience to fashion, one sees more clearly that in himself, and in his marvellous gifts, there is the material that will resist the wear of time.

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[1] The publication of *Lord Byron's Correspondence, Chiefly with Lady Melbourne*, etc., 1922, seems to have practically settled the matter.

His literary personality is no less complicated. His instincts are fundamentally classical, in the sense that he does not conceive of fitness in form without an adequate precision, and sacrifices nothing to suggestion. He was deeply influenced by the Ancients, and still more by Pope and his school; he never repudiated this culture; on the contrary, he always proclaimed his indebtedness to it, setting it up in opposition to the new and tentative efforts of a Wordsworth or a Southey, on which he passed a very severe judgment. His first poems have a quality of rhythm and language which betrays at every turn the disciple of the eighteenth century; it is but barely that an original temperament, hungering for emotion, and bent upon dramatizing life, can be discerned in them. When a wounded pride brought him self-revelation, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* made an impression through the harsh force of a satire modelled on the *Dunciad,* and in which the most ill-treated poets are the Lakists. Such remained his conscious tastes; and if in the end he felt the magnetism of a Shelley, he never believed that he himself broke away from tradition. A democrat through spite as well as generosity, but an aristocrat at heart, he despised Wordsworth's peasant prosaism, and what he regarded as the vulgarity of Keats. Among his contemporaries, he praises most highly the writers of a semi-conservative style, such as a Campbell or a Rogers. These were not mere superficial judgments; his entire nature is here involved; his career closes in a satirical realism, developed with a lucid perfection of form that is akin to the classical ideal. But a powerful Romanticism of the sensibility very quickly carried his art into wild adventurous domains, where it little avails him to continue the cult of his masters, or apply their lessons: for his poetry is made new by the irresistible outpouring of a wholly personal inspiration.

Not that he is much of an innovator in language or mètre. He was never capable of shaping for his own use a faultless verbal instrument; to the very end, his style has its dross, its traces of automatism and affectation, its evidence of carelessness. His attempt at the archaic manner was not a successful venture in *Childe Harold;* rhetoric and abstraction are never far removed from his moral reflections. He has rather been a happy imitator than a creator of rhythms; he handles the short line of Scott, the Spenserian stanza, and blank verse, with honourable success; it is the "ottava rima" of *Beppo* and *Don Juan,* the swift and mocking stanza that so effectively carries and sets off a saucy intent, which most clearly bears his personal stamp. But he is a great writer by virtue of his energy of expression. At times it is a massive energy, compact, loaded to the full with sensations, evocative of realities or of primary emotions, rather than of delicate shades or dreams, unparalleled for the power of shock it can communicate to words, but at the same time not incapable of interpreting the splendour or grace of a landscape; at other times a more disciplined force, which restrains itself, and only spends and reveals itself in the pliable firmness with which an ironical design is sustained, developed and given precision in terms at once appropriate, effective and graphic. The Romanticist is better seen in the first range of effects, the classicist in the second; in his best style Byron tends to make these two aspects converge and amalgamate in a simplicity, vehement or sly, but always forceful.

His work is more varied than the simplified picture of his genius, retained in the memory of the general public, would suggest. *Childe Harold* and the tales of the type of *The Giaour* may be regarded as a group, the best known, and the most actively influential in England and abroad. Here we have the development of the specially Byronic theme of a melancholy that is disenchanted and associated with all the vanity of human endeavour, as with the beauties of Nature; whether the scenic setting be taken from actual places, or from an East which the imagination is pleased to leave vague; whether history provides the plots, or fiction invents them. The first two cantos of *Childe Harold* attempt to link up this theme with the contemporary vogue of the mediæval past; but Byron's pilgrim knight is only a pretext; the last two cantos, with their more solid thought, a riper pathos and safer art, end by forgetting the existence of the said knight. From now onwards the poet imparts more life to his heroes, because he gives them more sincerely his own; the collection of these ill-fated and gloomy figures, which embody his romantic feeling of himself, acquires a greater relief in his last portraits; the Manfred and the Cain of Byron not only represent the destiny of an individual stricken with remorse, but doubt, revolt, pessimism, all the impassioned negations or interrogations which constitute the philosophy of the *mal du siècle*. But here the tale in verse gives place to the drama and the mystery play.

The fanciful lure which a century ago wove itself round these tales, and the poignant poetry which clothed this melancholy procession of great images, have lost much of their power; the formula has been overdone, and a more critical age now perceives only too well the subjective arbitrariness which this attitude or doctrine involves. But if *Childe Harold* is now no more than a series of episodes, these at least often possess a striking vigour; the oratorical movement in the narrative turns into a note of lyrical eloquence when sustained by the personal feeling of the poet. The glory and the downfall of the past, too uniformly interpreted from a generalizing point of view, behind the impersonality of which lies hidden an afterthought of self, are less soul-stirring, however, than the scenes from Nature. It is here that Byron is most original; without forgetting himself, he paints admirable pictures of the elements, in their calm and above all in their fury. The emotion infused in these landscapes is born of the delightful relaxing of a sorrow-laden soul, that yearns for untrammelled expansion; in its moments of greatest ardour, this egoistical effusion borders on a mystic communion. In Byron we have a pantheism, very different from that of his contemporaries; the universe for him is a mysterious power, and an accomplice, looking benignly upon rebellious spirits because it ignores human orthodoxies; a help to souls in torment because it appeases them, and fortifies in them the bitterly strong feeling they have of themselves.

The Venetian tragedies, and *Sardanapalus,* are comparatively regular, and fairly classical in spirit; they suggest the influence of Alfieri. Despite their estimable merits, it is elsewhere that Byron displays the full dramatic force of his genius; on quite another scale are *Manfred* and *Cain,* where the action oversteps both reality and history to enter into the plane of philosophical symbolism, and where the true drama sets the modern conscience and thought against traditional faith. Such was the judgment of Goethe, who allocated a place to the author of *Manfred* among the allegorical personages of the second part of *Faust.*[1]

In the last group of poems another Byron is shown. The doctrine of life is here the same, but is expressed in the lighter or corrosive tone of irony, and not in that of pathos. The sauciness which from the first had accompanied in an undertone the direct appeal to the reader's sympathy, now becomes dominant; inversely, the satire is at times interrupted in order to allow the tragic or idyllic mood to reappear. Steeped as he was in the literary atmosphere of Italy, Byron had drawn his inspiration from noble memories when he wrote *The Prophecy of Dante, The Lament of Tasso;* another element of this atmosphere, however, the sceptical gaiety of a society as witty as it is free from all restraint, was acting upon him in a contrary direction. At all times favourable to mock-heroic themes, Italian literature had very definite models to offer in the works of burlesque writers, from Pulci to Casti. After having tried his verve in *Beppo,* Byron gave full and much more ample vent to it in *Don Juan.*

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[1] See Brandl, *Goethe's Verhältniss zy Byron* (*Goethe-Jahrbuch,* vol. xx., 1899).

As though a part of his temperament felt the strain of the moving intensity which he had sought so long, he henceforth turns to parody his former attitude; *Don Juan* is an ironic replica of the very subject of *Childe Harold.* The new hero is hardly more substantial; and the sequence of events is quite as boldly made dependent on the poet's fancy. Of unequal merit, and in places dragging, but full of varied resources, the tale carries us to the most diverse parts of Europe, as to the extremities of fortune. The spirit which animates it is that of disabused experience, and of Voltaire's *Candide;* the literary practices of the eighteenth century are praised on every occasion; but not to mention the outbursts of passion or lyricism, there is here in the satire of society and manners a bitterness which implies that the heart is giving itself away. The note of inner Romanticism is unmistakable. The work abounds in brilliant pictures and witty digressions; the jocular vein in turn harsh, comic and by choice unexpected, has in it something reminiscent of Swift and Sterne; the whole savours, nevertheless, of undeniable originality. The choice of scenes, the philosophy of events, and the irreverent wisdom of numberless critical remarks, all are aimed against the system of conventional values in which humanity places its sincere belief or its instinctive cowardice of soul; and among all the pious or calculating lies, Byron singles out for his repeated strokes the false rigour of principles, the weight of which he had one day been made to feel by an English society which he had threatened with scandal.

Something of all these successive and in no way contradictory attitudes went to the making of "Byronism": their common essence. . . . According to the moment, and the nature of the person, such or such an element prevailed;[1] the ardent and the tragic poet alone had an appeal for Lamartine, whilst Musset, above all, delighted in the blasé master of mockery. Under one form or another, the wave of influence emanating from Byron was mingled with the current of French Romanticism itself.

3. **Shelley.**—Of a shorter span than that of Byron, and concentrated within some ten years, Shelley's poetical career[2] permits, however, of being divided

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[1] For France see Estève, *Byron et le romantisme français,* 1907; for the influence of "Byronism" in Europe, etc., see a bibliographical summary in Elton, *A Survey,* etc. (1780–1830), vol. ii., pp. 419-20.

[2] Percy Bysshe Shelley, born in 1792, in Sussex, of a family of rural gentry, studied at Eton, then at Oxford, from which he was expelled on account of his religious opinions; married Harriet Westbrook (1811), adopted the philosophical ideas of Godwin; after several attempts in verse (*Original Poetry by Victor and Cazire,* 1810, etc.), and in prose (*Zastrozzi,* 1810; *St. Irvyne,* 1811, etc.), he wrote a philosophical poem, *Queen Mab* (published 1813); parted with his wife, and left England with Mary Godwin, daughter of the philosopher; on his return he wrote *Alastor,* 1816; then sojourned with Byron in Switzerland, 1816; composed a symbolic and revolutionary epic (*Laon and Cythna,* remodelled under the title of *The Revolt of Islam,* 1818); after the suicide of his wife (1816), his second marriage, and before the judiciary finding which refused him the guardianship of his children, he definitively left England for Italy (1818), resided at Venice, Rome, Pisa, etc., published *Rosalind and Helen,* 1819; a tragedy, *The Cenci,* 1819; a lyrical drama, *Prometheus Unbound,* 1820; a satirical drama, *Swellfoot the Tyrant,* 1820; a poem, *Epipsychidion,* 1821; an elegy on the death of Keats, *Adonais,* 1821; a lyric drama on the theme of Greek independence, *Hellas,* 1822; in July, 1822, he died in the Gulf of Spezzia during a storm, through drowning, and perhaps was assassinated by pirates. He left, in addition to the above-mentioned works, numerous poems, published during his lifetime or after his death, among which satires: *The Masque of Anarchy, Peter Bell the Third;* lyrical pieces: *The Sensitive Plant, The Witch of Atlas, Ode to the West Wind, The Cloud, The Triumph of Life,* etc.; prose

up into stages; it is possible and instructive to follow its development. But a study of this kind would demand minute detail. A summary appreciation must here examine it as a whole.

Shelley's life was one of passionate devotion to intellect, and this ardour explains how his ideas were transmuted into poetry. However, this intellectual stamp is too strongly marked upon him, for one to neglect the doctrine which he embraced, and to which he gave himself with a true and deep zeal. Here again, one can witness a process of change, a progress in many-sidedness and in flexibility; but one perceives no serious deviation, and unity predominates. Shelley was taught by experience, without being forced to disavow his principles. His early death makes it hardly possible to settle the question; he seems, however, to have belonged to that rare species of mankind whom reason and feeling convert into revolutionaries in the flush of youth, and who remain so for the rest of their lives.

The work of feeling this was, as much as that of reason. Of a sensitive, highly strung nature, Shelley was stirred at an early age by the spirit of revolt; from a boy's miseries he reaped a sense of cruelty and injustice; the fever of adolescence, an already mystical intuition of what true faith could and should be, the contagious influence of French ideas then in the air, made of him from his University days one of those pure believers who are chilled by the semi-sceptical coldness of orthodoxy, and who give their own burning zeal the name of irreligion. Godwin then provided him with a system; he took it, made it his own, and scarcely perceived that he was gradually altering its very essence. The doctrine of "necessity," or absolute determinism, now became a profession of warm hope in the moral liberty of a will addicted to goodness; anarchical individualism inclined more definitely towards a humanitarian brotherhood and the authority of the wise; negatory rationalism became transformed into a desperate affirmation of intuitive truths, and atheistic materialism developed into an idealistic pantheism.

Diverse tendencies had coexisted in Godwin himself; by allowing certain of these full play, Shelley believed that he was still faithful to the teaching of his master, and this belief was not entirely illusory. In its active conclusions, the doctrine which animates his poems actually traces out a parallel furrow; it represents a philosophical and social force working in the same direction. Thus spiritualized, the gospel of Godwin became Shelley's own belief; in it the instincts of his being found an echoing response, and it is the cause which he never ceased to serve. Whatever the judgments one may pass on certain of his acts, one is forced to recognize in this unshaken devotion of both mind and conduct the courage and sincerity of his moral life.

His work must be organized round this central desire for theoretical expression. Several groups correspond to unequal degrees of doctrinal tension or of dominant intellectuality. There are the writings in which demonstration is the chief feature, whether their very structure is by far too didactic in character, or whether the art which clothes the thesis with imagery, emotional colouring or a symbolical atmosphere is unable to acquire full independence. The first two great poems of Shelley, *Queen Mab* and *Laon and Cythna,* while they

writings, among which, *A Defence of Poetry,* 1821. *Works in Verse and Prose,* ed. by Forman, 1880; *Complete Poet. Works,* ed. by Hutchinson, 1907; *Poems,* ed. by Locock, 1911; ed. by Koszul (Everyman's Library); *Lyrical Poems,* etc., *Dramatic Poems,* ed. by Herford, 1917–22; *Literary and Philosophical Criticism,* ed. by Shawcross, 1911; *Letters,* ed. by Ingpen, 1912. See biographies by Medwin (ed. by Forman, 1913), Hogg (ed. by Dowden, 1906); Sharp, 1887; Dowden, 1896; information in Trelawny (*Recollections,* etc.; ed. by Dowden, 1906; *Records,* etc., 1878); studies by Matthew Arnold (*Essays in Criticism,* 2nd Series, 1888); Sarrazin, *Poètes Mod. d'Angleterre,* 1885; Rabbe, 1887; Symonds, 1887; Richter, 1898; Chevrillon, *Études Anglaises,* 1901; Kroder, 1903 (on metre); Ackermann, 1906; Francis Thompson, 1909; Clutton-Brock, 1910; Koszul, *La Jeunesse de Shelley,* 1910; Salt, 1913; Osborn, 1919; Strong, 1921.

clothe his originality, do not allow it to develop freely; one feels that the obsession of the mind by ideas which are in themselves aggressive and polemical goes to destroy the serenity of taste, and paralyzes it in its choice of the elements of beauty. It is not actually on account of their doctrine that these allegories of the emancipation of mankind through revolutionary reason, or again of heroic apostolate in its struggle with violence, are relatively inferior, but by the quality of the effort which lends it imaginative expression. They are, however, far from being devoid of significance. Quite different is the case with the prose writings, in which the importance of form is very substantially reduced, while the thought can in all legitimacy present itself with no decorative vestment of words. The essays of Shelley are not works of the first order; but they show cogency and lucidity; and one of them, *A Defence of Poetry,* in a tone of eloquence that is still demonstrative, unites the pressing rigour of reasoning with the strong and infectious vehemence of passion.

In another class of poems the same enthusiasm of thought is expressed, but effectively incorporated either with visions and symbols, or with a definite emotion and a concrete theme. Here it is that Shelley shows himself a master of philosophical, political and elegiac poetry. In *Alastor* this perfect balance is attempted, but not with genuine success; an over-exuberant imagination pours itself forth and covers up the inner purpose of the work almost to the point of concealment. In at best a hardly coherent outline is traced the figurative destiny of a noble, restless soul whom the witchery of solitude attracts and destroys, while meaner creatures are encouraged and fortified in their weakness by mutual support. The *Moïse* of Vigny develops a somewhat analogous theme. Shelley is nowhere so purely a Romanticist; the ardour and anguish of a vague desire, the splendour of the universe, and the secret languor mingled with the ecstasies which Nature pours out, have never been more vividly expressed. *Prometheus Unbound* is the richest and most beautiful fusion of the doctrine with a suggestive complex of emotions and images. By altering the ancient Greek myth, and infusing it with a wholly modern thought, the poet draws from it the magnificent illustration of the victory which the genius of man pursues even through suffering, and which he will win over the powers of evil by virtue of the force of love. The setting of this cosmic drama, its actors, its incidents, the pains and the joys of a world oppressed by the tyranny of Heaven and restored to its primal purity by a supreme act of liberation, all bear the touch of a sovereign grandeur, of a pathos vast in its scope, of a bright or graceful magic, without either the contours of the symbol or the more spiritual features of the idea losing their vigorous note. Of kindred quality are the elegy where Shelley in the person of Keats weeps over but above all exalts the sacred victims of immortal idealism (*Adonais*); and the touching evocation of the sure triumph of Hellenic independence (*Hellas*). To this group of masterpieces should be added the political satires, where the doctrinal zeal of the writer is curbed to a more concrete exposition, while the disciplined emotion allows of an art, the more firm for its soberness, as in *The Mask of Anarchy.*

Lastly, the poems of pure effusion no longer express Shelley's ideas in a direct manner. Ideas, however, are not far to seek, for the unfolding of the imagery and the contagious power of the feeling call them forth by a more or less imperious and subtle affinity; but the poetry is first and foremost vision, emotion and music; what it suggests to the intelligence is an element of its own prestige, a further note in its inner resonance, not its main motive and source. And here we have the vast domain of lyricism, in which Shelley reigns supreme. First there are some longer poems; where the composition, however free its flow, obeys a fixed plan, in which the logical mind has still its part: *The Witch of Atlas,* the capricious play of an enchanted imagination, which under the enthralling and fleeting succession of forms probably pursues the ever active spirit that animates Nature; *The Triumph of Life,* where according to some obscure scheme, which the poem, if completed, would have made clearer, the pageant of Life emerges and passes before our eyes, spreading along its track the illusion of a distinct existence; *Epipsychidion,* that effusion of platonic and passionate love, the flights and ardour of which are directed by a definite mysticism. Next come the admirable series of lyrical "moments," either self-sufficient—poems of a day, or an hour, where a creative emotion embodies itself in the images and melodies which can make us realize and share it; or more or less connected with a whole, such as the choruses and songs of *Hellas* and *Prometheus.*

Shelley's lyricism is incomparable. In no other do we find the perfect sureness, the triumphant rapidity of this upward flight, this soaring height, the superterrestrial quality as well as the poignant intensity of the sounds which fall from these aerial regions. Truly, never was the soul of a poet so spontaneously lyrical—in the modern sense in which the word no longer implies a concentrated purpose of learned, harmonious and noble exaltation, but the immediate and complete vibration of a naturally vocal sensibility in contact with the world. Everything with Shelley is the occasion for a musical stir, since his powers of feeling are the keenest attuned and most delicate of this age; sensation, like emotion, with him oversteps the normal diapason, moving in a higher scale; the susceptibility of his physical and moral organism is such, that his work bears throughout the diffuse traces of a kind of psychological morbidness—the meeting of extremes, the confusion of different domains, the inversion of senses and values, etc. There subsists an energy, if not always a virility, in this somewhat enervating atmosphere, where the fibres of inner being are strung almost to breaking point; the tone of Shelley's poetry is not that of a voluptuous sensuality, but of a keen aspiration, in which mystical desire, with its anguished pangs and spiritual raptures, transcends the joys and sufferings of ordinary mankind. The unattainable aim of these efforts is the impossible return of individual life to the whole, with which the poet's thrilling intuition seizes his essential kinship. Pantheism is here a living faith, ardently realized through direct knowledge, at the same time as it is conceived by reason. A divine immanence sheds its rays throughout the universe, illuminating from within the heaviest mass of matter; everything is light, just as everything is life; but at the very core of things Shelley's idealism puts love, and Plato is equally his master with Spinoza. No philosophy makes either more easy or more true that intimate fusion of Nature and mind which is actually the method of modern lyricism.

In this way have been created the wondrous myths and the cosmic schemes in which the elements, the planets, and on a less superhuman scale, the clouds and the west wind, become quickened with their individual existence, and speak a language that we can understand; in this way are rendered possible the minute wonders of imaginative sympathy, which can evoke a whole silent drama in the flowering corner of some deserted garden, or which can express the rapturous song of the lark, the numb happy consciousness of the glow-worm. But in spite of this infinite diffusion of its soul, the most taking notes of Shelley's lyricism are those where, mingling with the serene choir of all Nature, we hear the human lament of one who foresees and remembers, limited in his strength and even in his love, mourning for those ecstasies that are too rare, for the fleeting apparitions of "intellectual beauty" and "the spirit of joy."

Whatever the voice which speaks to us, Shelley has the gift of lending it the sweetest and most liquid harmonies, not the most sonorous and sensual, but pure in their vehement intensity. A delicious sadness emanates from this blending of notes, now high and now low, but always in a minor key; and the song they compose is the very utterance of the wounded sensibility which the divorce of action and a too lofty desire has given not only to Romanticism, but to the modern age. The flowing ease with which the words merge into one another, at the same time as the ideas they call forth join up together, goes to prove that for Shelley, the most poetical of poets, the psychological melody and the cadence of syllables, as spontaneous the one as the other, naturally formed but one music. He has experimented with all rhythms; the suppleness and variety of his prosody are extraordinary; the Spenserian stanza of *Adonais,* the "terza rima" of *The Triumph of Life,* the metrical combinations of *Prometheus,* are the variations of a master upon accepted themes, or the inventions of an original genius. Even when the form testifies to the poet's negligence, and as it were to his impatience, when it lacks the finish only to be acquired from an industrious art, it retains the felicity of inspired expression; and this language, like this measure, so individual, through their characteristic turn, their liquid but ever undulating flow, which is a continual creation, and not the forced adaptation of a rhythmic utterance to a preconceived framework, convey to us the poignant impression of our being in contact with the innermost pulsations of the artist's heart.

There are yet other sides to Shelley's art. By a true miracle, this lyric poet, so essentially personal, succeeded in writing a great drama. Or rather, this escape from self which the intuitive penetration of other lives involves made it possible for him, by attaching himself to them, penetrating into their recesses, and developing them for their own sakes, to attain without effort to the objectivity of drama. *The Cenci* is a tragedy of sombre pathos, where the fascination of crime and the energy of heroic innocence are thrown into relief with a vigour, and frequently also with a sobriety, which, while recalling the exuberance of the Elizabethans, do not allow any slackening of the means at the command of a meditative and concentrated art. There was in Shelley, in germ, a whole development in this direction, as is proved by a fragment, *Charles I.*[1] There was also a capacity for escaping the wearing intensity of lyricism, or the tension of philosophical zeal, by way of the familiar playfulness, the free expansion of a personal self which yet is determined and able to keep its deeper secrets inviolated; and these epistles, these conversations in verse have a particular charm of their own, just as they possess a special quality of language. The relaxing of inspiration leads Shelley back from his customary and indeed sincere vein, a romantic one, to a plane of his moral being which is no doubt more superficial, but where is revealed the classical gift of exactness joined to simplicity in style (*Rosalind and Helen, Julian and Maddalo,* etc.).

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[1] The 19th century, after the long decadence which filled the 18th (see above, Book III. chap. iv.), shows the almost complete eclipse of original dramatic production in England. The divorce between the theatre and life is accentuated; the noteworthy dramas of this period are historical, philosophical, and poetical works, which appeal to the imagination, to the reflection, and not to the eye. Despite the difference in kind, the gulf is not very great between the *Prometheus Unbound* of Shelley, the *Cain* of Byron, and the plays of Tennyson and Browning. The *Cenci* of Shelley assumes an exceptional value from this point of view; staged recently, it made a very strong impression. The great successes which one could mention in connection with the Romantic age (the *Virginius,* 1820; the *William Tell,* 1825, of James Sheridan Knowles, 1784–1862; the *Mirandola* [1821] of Procter ["Barry Cornwall"], 1787-1874) owe much to the talent of eminent actors, Kemble and Macready. From now onwards, and for the space of two generations, the most genuine dramatic inspiration is to be found in the inquiries of pure psychology, in the ideal oppositions of character: *Imaginary Conversations* of Landor (see below, chap. v.), *Monologues* of Browning (see Book VI chap. iv.), etc. The revival of the theatre at the end of the 19th century will be brought about by the re-established contact between the stage with its concrete exigencies, and the moral passions of the times, under the form permitted by the "problem play," and the social drama.

He remains, above all, a lyric poet, the greatest that England or perhaps modern Europe has produced. His influence, in the beginning, was confined to an élite; Browning and Tennyson came strongly under his spell; since then, it has spread, and become a great force in literature, extending to foreign countries, where through certain affinities it has found a way to some talented writers; the French symbolists were not unacquainted with Shelley's work. He is, however, only accessible in an easy manner to such minds as are independent, sensitive and subtle, and capable of rediscovering in themselves something of the freshness and wonder of primitive man.

4. **Keats.**—The figure and the work of Keats[1] bear the mark of a miraculous youth, cut short by death just when it had attained a precocious maturity; he lived a little longer than twenty-five years. With surprisingly rapid progress he passed from early efforts full of promise to masterpieces. One may therefore distinguish only two successive moments in his poetry. And to the student of his verse all else tends to lose significance beside the originality, the vigour of a temperament of unequalled gifts.

In a social circle where nothing seemed to herald such a growth, and which, if it did not actually stifle it, afforded it only a very meagre support; without the high culture of a University, but with the lessons of a teacher and friend alike, there developed an ardent vocation, a passionate love for beauty. An instinctive desire first and foremost, implanted in a nature that is highly sensual. But the æstheticism of Keats has also an intellectual side. No one has ever reaped such a rich harvest of thought out of the suggestions which life had to offer; through reading, and a thirst for knowledge, he became acquainted with Greece, paganism and ancient art, or conjured up in his imagination all that these stood for; he became impregnated with Hellenism, having nothing of the erudite about him, but rather the naïvety, the trifling errors, the penetrating and exact intuitional powers of a self-taught genius. He read the writers of the Renaissance, loved and cultivated Spenser, Chapman, Fletcher, Milton. How closely the cult of Shakespeare was interwoven with the tenor of his thought can be seen from his private letters. Wordsworth he admired most of all among his contemporary writers, although the closest influence was that of Leigh Hunt, to whom he was indebted for something of his first manner.

From all these elements, Keats builds up for himself a personal store of reflections and ideas; his intellectual ambition is high; he realizes what is lacking in his nature, and is determined to acquire a philosophy. Religion for him takes definite shape at an early age, in the adoration of the beautiful. But this adoration he elaborates into a doctrine: Beauty is the supreme Truth;

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[1] John Keats, born in London, in 1795, came of a family of modest condition; an orphan at 15 years of age, he was first intended for a medical career, but gave himself up entirely to poetry. With no encouragement save the friendship of Leigh Hunt, of Haydon, the painter, etc., he published in 1817 a volume of *Poems;* in 1818, *Endymion: A Poetic Romance;* in 1820, *Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes, and Other Poems* (a second version of one of these, *Hyperion,* appeared in 1856). The critics in general were either indifferent or hostile to Keats; but if he suffered from this injustice, it did not, as has been said, cause his death. The year 1819, when he wrote his great *Odes,* was the culminating point in his brief career. Attacked by consumption, he vainly sought health in Italy, and died in Rome in 1821. His last months were darkened by a hopeless love. *Complete Works,* ed. by H. Buxton Forman, 1901; *Poetical Works,* ed. by H. B. Forman, 1908; ed. by de Sélincourt, 1912; ed. by Colvin, 1915; *Odes,* ed. by Downer, 1897; *Odes, Lyrics and Sonnets,* ed. by Hills, 1916; *Selected Poems,* ed. by Symons, 1907; *Letters,* ed. by H. B. Forman, 1895; *Letters, Papers,* etc., ed. by Williamson, 1914. See biographies and studies by Lord Houghton, new edn., 1906; Colvin (English Men of Letters), 1885; Rossetti (Great Writers), 1887; Hancock, 1908; notes in Leigh Hunt, *Autobiography,* 1860. Studies by Sarrazin, *Poètes Modernes d'Angleterre,* 1885; Texte (*Études de littérature européenne*), 1898; Latin thesis of Angellier, 1892; Suddard (*Keats, Shelley,* etc.), 1912; Wolff (*Keats, vie et œuvre,* 1910); idem, *An Essay on Keats's Treatment of the Heroic Rhythm,* 1909; Fausset (*Keats, a Study in Development*), 1922.

it is imagination that discovers it, and scientific reasoning, armed as it is to analyze and dissect, is an altogether inferior instrument of knowledge. This idealism, probably encouraged by the teaching of Coleridge, easily assumes a note of mysticism; one can see a sustained allegory in *Endymion;* and certain passages are most surely possessed of a symbolical value. On the other hand, the religion of beauty is here more pagan, more free than it will be with Ruskin and his disciples; while it has not the character of absolute indifference with regard to moral principles, which æstheticism will show towards the end of the century. Despite certain traces of commonness which his work has almost entirely eliminated, there is in Keats a delicacy of the senses as of feeling; there is even a diffuse puritanism, to which his early environment had unconsciously accustomed him, and which his relations with the circle of Leigh Hunt had weakened but not destroyed. An inherent generosity, a nobility of soul to which his life as well as his work bears testimony, finally decide his career as a writer: he will have a mission to perform, a duty to fulfil. His social and religious ideas are critical and independent; on the whole, this dreamer, this pure artist was in spiritual sympathy with the Radicals of his day. But he consecrated his endeavours to a positive task; his intention is to serve, through the medium of poetry, the cause of a moral progress in which he believes. The pessimism, and the voluptuous irresponsibility which often emanate from his lines, must not hide from us his genuine adhesion to the notion—almost universally accepted at that time in England—of a priesthood in literature.

It would, however, be paradoxical to lay the main emphasis upon these conscious desires of the poet. There is in the culture of Keats a deficiency, resulting from his incomplete education; he explores the world of ideas by the aid of a keen intellectual curiosity, an upright judgment, but also with a slight inexperience. No doubt his maturity would have given definite shape to the intentions of his early years; they remain, such as we know them, somewhat vague and shifting. Despite the sincerity of his effort, his doctrine is neither very coherent nor very original. To insist too much upon it is to be unjust to his work; indeed it is not through it that his poetry will live.

Keats is pre-eminently a man of sensations, with whom the very activities of intelligence bring into play concrete notions, images and qualities. Thanks to a principle of choice with which the intuition of genius gradually furnishes him, he makes his way towards the ideal of balance which is that of the most perfect classicism, having started from no other principle but that of Romantic intensity. His art is full of passion; it is above all aspiration and desire; and the object of this desire is not the "intellectual beauty" of Shelley, but that which reveals itself to the enchantment of the senses. It is easy to discern in his work the whole gamut of sensations, set off by a richness and a softness of colouring which reveal the complacency of a refined fondness. With nothing suggestive of animality or violence, in a spirit of pagan wisdom in which, it is true, there is discernible the tremor of a kind of very modern eagerness, the cup of voluptuousness which Nature offers to mankind is tasted by a sensibility which finds in every drop the food for poetic thought. Pleasure becomes spiritualized into joy, and joy becomes irradiated with beauty. Emotion has its share in this feast of the senses; Keats is by no means the epicurean according to whom true enjoyment of life is only secured through a calm and detached reasonableness; he himself has known the pain, the fever of passion. But this deepening of the inner resonance of the soul is hardly to be found save in his masterpieces, as in his later years; in his early poems, love is depicted with a somewhat exterior energy, as well as a deliquescent languor.

Herein appears the wonder of his so speedy development, guided as it was by a sure and seemingly infallible instinct. At the beginning, he had nearly all the faults of his qualities. *Endymion,* despite admirable passages, represents the error of an undisciplined genius, which is seriously threatened by an habitual failing of the tact itself of æsthetic perception. The future of such a mind might seem anything but safe. The poet is dazzled by his own ardour, which leads him to diffuse his attention over mere details, making him lose his sense of organized wholes; the contours of the landscape, just as those of the action, are confused and blurred; in a hot and heavy atmosphere, there rises a vapour which bewitches the will-power, distorts the vision, and lends every perspective the strange and disquieting effect of a mirage. An over-wealthy imagination multiplies the descriptive features; an overstrung sensibility carries each notation to the extreme; and a design of seductive grace and conscious charm is expressed in a language which is often artificial, loaded with elaborate ornaments, with rare, archaic or affected epithets. The whole savours at the same time of precocity of profusion, of the strain of an ever-present intensity, and finally somewhat of morbidness; one feels in it an uncertain taste, and the effort of a literary endeavour heroically carried through against an inspiration that is at times rebellious. Yet, from this disappointing and fatiguing work, there radiates out a youthful enthusiasm so genuine and contagious, as to leave an ineffaceable impression upon the reader.

This exuberance, however, is of short duration, and the incertitude of the poet in his art gives place to the assurance of self-mastery. Not that a transition cannot be felt; *Lamia,* for example, is not free from the failings which marked the first manner. Again, among the masterpieces, everything is not on the same level. It is still permissible to judge as too ornate, and somewhat decadent in style, the delightful legend of *The Eve of Saint Agnes;* in the pathos of *Isabella, or the Pot of Basil,* all the notes are not of an equal sureness, and elements of too great a diversity are blended but imperfectly. Keats at his best supplies the matter for only a very small collection of poems: the original version of *Hyperion,* almost all the *Odes, La Belle Dame sans Merci,* and the most beautiful sonnets. . . . Here asserts itself a wonderful realization of what sobriety can be in its fusion with the force of touch and the wealth of expression. Keats effects that rare union of classical discipline, guided by the example and precepts of the Ancients, with the more intrinsically precious matter which the artist finds in Romanticism. The exigence of perfection is there, but also at the same time all the positive substance of which poetry had long since been emptied by a school of correctness based upon Reason; the attempt of a Collins is again taken up, but is carried much further; a stronger force of selection, of order and harmony is brought to bear on an unlimited range of revivified sensations and emotions. Nothing could be more truly Romantic, nor could the very figure of antiquity be animated with more concrete life.

Hyperion is an epic poem in which Keats, competing with Milton on a footing of equality, desires to relate the celestial revolutions of pagan mythology, as did Milton the Christian cycle of a paradise lost and regained. Keats's enterprise is of a bolder and more dangerous character, for the elements of interest which his subject offers are of a still more austere and less human order; but while his imagination is no less powerful, it displays a more plastic quality than that of his great forerunner. Scarcely outlined as it is, but already arresting by the vastness of conception which it promises, as by its visions of a gigantic and primitive world, this work stands out in wondrous majesty.

The favourite themes of Keats's romanticism are set in the *Odes* in short and elaborate forms, constructed with harmonious skill: the sculptural grace of Greek attitudes, the nostalgy of the charming myths of Hellas, the changing seasons and the joys of the earth, the anguished yearnings of the soul to find a beauty which endures; and with this "Dionysian" inspiration is fused the bitter-sweet voluptuousness enclosed in the impassioned meditation of death. Everything here co-operates to enchant a sensual and dreamy contemplation: the outlines, the colour, the emotion and the melody; the tone has a smooth suavity, and yet is free from any excess of softness or ease: indeed it is constantly relieved by notes of vigour. The most original character of this art is its density; each epithet is extraordinarily rich in suggestion; the long lingering of each word in a thought which lovingly enfolds it, has loaded it with a whole spiritual crystallization. Each of the images, which by an exquisite tact have been selected from among the most evocative, opens up to our view a far-reaching perspective. In these poems of his maturity, the language of Keats scintillates with all the gems of speech, without their brilliance predominating over the conciseness and nervous exactness of the whole. The rhythms, handled by an artist who is alive to the power of music, are not so much new creations, as perfect adaptations to the supreme unity of an impression.

It is useless to remember here the doctrinal purpose which the poet may have framed for himself in the resolutions of his early years. The confessions of these lines are quite other in their candour. A life founded upon sensation reveals the secret of its ultimate melancholy. Without pushing too far our inductions from the texts, we must see in them the seed of that psychological morbidness of which the century, then in its opening period, was to witness the gradual development; the pain of joy, and the joy of pain, are already sounded by Keats, and passion itself becomes conscious of the cruelty which hides in some of its ardours. English Romanticism attains in Keats the final stage of its progress; and this pessimism is deeper and more significant than that of Byron: it has not its secret source in any tragic mystery, and it is thus much more inevitable. It springs from the satiety of a soul which yet has made no demands upon the more common joys of life; it is made up of the unconquerable feeling of the fragility of beautiful forms, as of the vanity of the effort through which desire seeks to transcend itself. In its bitter realism, its clear-sighted sadness, clothed in harmonies both sumptuous and full, the *Ode on Melancholy* has a foretaste of the *Fleurs du Mal*.

Keats, when he died, gave promise of becoming the greatest poet of his generation; and one who, better than any other, would have united the free inspiration of Romanticism with the formal principle of the schools of the past. Some hundreds of lines raise him to the level of the highest. His influence has never ceased to grow; all those schools which claimed as their principle a plastic notion of art have seen in him their master; the Pre-Raphaelites, just as the English Æsthetes, originate in part from him. Despite the concentrated and difficult quality of his language, the finer artists, in every nation, have felt the radiance of his example.

To be consulted: Brandes, *Die Hauptströmungen*, etc., vol. iv., 1876 (English translation [*Main Currents*, etc.] 1905); *Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. xii., chaps. ii., iii., iv.; Elton, *Survey of English Literature*, 1780–1830, 1920; Estève, *Byron et le romantisme français*, 1907; E. Halévy, *Histoire du Peuple Anglais au XIX*^{e} *Siècle*, vols. i. and ii., 1913–23; Leigh Hunt, *Lord Byron and Some of His Contemporaries*, 1828; idem, *Autobiography*, 1850; A. Koszul, *La Jeunesse de Shelley*, 1910; Th. Moore, *The Letters and Journals of Lord Byron*, 1930; Pierce, *Currents and Eddies in the English Romantic Generation*, 1919; Schelling, *The English Lyric*, 1913; Symons, *The Romantic Movement in English Poetry*, 1909; Taine, *Hist. de la Littérature anglaise*, vol. iv., 1864; Trelawny, *Recollections*, etc., 1858; E. E. Williams, *Journal*, etc., 1902.

CHAPTER V

THE SEMI-ROMANTICISTS

Among the contemporaries of Coleridge and Shelley, the figures of secondary importance, whose lights pale before the brilliance of exceptional geniuses, are nevertheless of keen interest. The work of these writers does not offer in the same degree the character of passionate imagination. They belong to their time, but do not bear its single stamp with imperative definiteness. While classifying them at their places and in their generation, one may call them "semi-Romanticists." They reveal both the persistence of certain psychological elements inherited from classicism, and already the first signs of a moral transition which will raise against Romanticism a deep literary reaction. With them the classical temperament persists more or less, in some traits, and under some forms; while there are indications on the other hand of a search for a new standard of balance, where a sobered Romanticism will enter as an element in a rational synthesis of art and life. Their complex features derive an added attraction from this variety; and indeed the inferiority of their individual note in literature is wholly relative; several among them possess, in their mixed quality, a remarkable vigour.

1. The Poets: Rogers, Moore, etc.—One is accustomed to link up Rogers[1] with the past. His nature, in fact, like that of Campbell,[2] bears the indelible stamp of tradition. But he shows more suppleness, and better succeeds in keeping pace with his time.

Yet, never has fame fallen so low. Rogers expiates in excessive discredit an exaggerated favour, the result of a transitory harmony with the average taste of his epoch. He was the idol of those who, faithful to the old ideal, were not without experiencing the need for some novelty in literature.

His first writings were in the most banal tone of a moralizing pre-Romanticism. *The Pleasures of Memory* have nothing to relieve a background of abstractions, save an insignificant elegiac music of easy and too familiar rhythm. With the progress of an audacious literature, which from a distance he was able to understand, there awakened in him a more forceful energy of feeling and expression.

His *Italy* is an interesting work. The lifeless part is that which follows, either the merely passive tradition of a scholarly pseudo-classicism, or the example of Byron. The influence of *Childe Harold* is to be felt throughout this whole series of episodes, stories and local impressions. But Rogers's inspiration is not far removed, at bottom, from that of the didactic writers of the eighteenth century; in vain does he seek to impart, like Byron, a sublime touch to his reflections on history or on life. When he does no violence to his temperament, he has the gift of seeing and catching the character of places and people, of portraying the picturesqueness of Italy, present or past;

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[1] Samuel Rogers (1763–1855), son of a banker, led the life of a financier, a rich and generous patron of letters, a poet of great repute, mixed with the literary society of his time. *The Pleasures of Memory*, 1792; *Epistle to a Friend, with Other Poems*, 1798; *Jacqueline*, 1814; *Human Life*, 1819; *Italy*, 1822–28. *Reminiscences and Table Talk*, ed. by Powell, 1903. *Poetical Works*, ed. by Bell, 1875; *Italy* (Routledge), 1890. See Clayden, *Rogers and His Contemporaries*, 1889; Roberts, *S. Rogers and His Circle*, 1910.

[2] See above, Book IV. chap. v. sect. 2.

and in order to inlay and set off these precise suggestions, his art can display a sure, piquant and felicitous touch. His vignettes, even at the present day, are strikingly true. Not only has he provided the model of a kind of tourist's guide in verse; but he has interpreted in a form accessible to all, in blank verse, which is not without force, something of the pathos and splendour with which Romanticism had enriched moral meditation and landscape painting. The work of this belated writer awakened in the conservative part of the public the sense of certain keener notes of expression, which his careful technique harmonized with traditional effects.

Still more famous than Rogers during his lifetime, Moore[1] is less neglected to-day; certain of his shorter poems continue to appear in anthologies. But his work as a whole has completely lost a popularity which equalled that of Byron and Scott. The reasons for such a fate are patent enough, although one may venture to suggest that it is somewhat unjust. With the passing of a century, the talent of Moore has had its deficiencies shown up, but it has not lost its charm. Literary history will probably leave him one of the first ranks among the Romanticists of the second order; for his poetry, however nerveless it may be, yet possesses an element of inspired originality in its musical flow and the felicity of its language.

A wholly superficial grace clothes the light amorous verses of his youth. Until the end, Moore will remain a society poet; a conventionality with a flavour of artifice will thus always be found intermingled with his marvellous ease of touch. But in this pleasing and somewhat false form of writing, no one has ever been more sincere; the very temperament of the poet is here attuned to the discreet gallantry, the elegiac sensibility, the witty delicacy, which go to make a successful drawing-room improviser. And the gifted poet is already revealed by a sureness of rhythm, a brilliance and an aptness of phrasing, which are nothing short of extraordinary.

These qualities stand out in greater relief when they are supported by a more serious theme. The *Irish Melodies,* even when deprived of the airs to which they were to be sung, have an expressive, seductive harmony which is a very efficacious instrument of suggestion. The national value of Moore's work must not be exaggerated; the Irish mind, now more conscious and jealous of its integrity, only half recognizes itself in this tempered transposition of its own essence, entirely adapted to suit both the preferences and the language of Englishmen. But it is difficult to deny that a diffuse feeling of Ireland, of her imagination and of her soul, has been infused in these verbal melodies where the music of the syllables, the nostalgy of the landscape, and the melancholy of a mourning people, are blended into such a winning harmony.

Lalla Rookh was the delight of a whole generation; and without experiencing this spell to the same degree, one can still realize it. In the making of the poem, many influences are to be found interwoven; Beckford, Southey and Byron prepared the way for this Oriental tale, although none of them actually supplied the model; the apportionment of the ingredients, the fusion of artistic luxuriance with dramatic and ironical elements, takes place according to the author's own formula. The whole is suavely romantic, somewhat over-sweet, but relieved by a sprightly vivacity and the intensity of a coloured vision. By combining tenderness with a veiled ardour, humour with the soberly sensual grace of Eastern imagery, Moore complies with the needs and curiosity of English taste, without exceeding the measure enforced by a clearly felt desire for idealization. In no other work does the talent of the writer more clearly show its affinity with properly feminine æsthetics. This vast fairy tale, of thin substance, but overflowing with inexhaustible lyricism, displays an art already Victorian, which would seem in some respects to announce the touch of Tennyson. The magic of the style, and the easy, varied happiness of an astonishing prosodic virtuosity, would make it a kind of masterpiece, were it not for a certain lavishness which overburdens the delicacy of its arabesques, and for the too fragile structure of this palace of the "Arabian Nights."

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[1] Thomas Moore, born in Dublin, in 1779, won the esteem of scholars by the translation in verse of Anacreon (1800), his *Poems of the Late Thomas Little* (1801), *Epistles, Odes and Other Poems* (1806); then that of the general public by his *Irish Melodies* (1807–34), *Lalla Rookh* (1817), *The Loves of the Angels* (1823). On the other hand, a series of political satires (*The Twopenny Post-Bag,* 1813; *The Fudge Family in Paris,* 1818; *Tom Crib's Memorial to Congress,* 1819; *Fables for the Holy Alliance,* 1923, etc.), served very successfully the cause of the Whig party. In prose, he wrote among other works a novel (*The Epicurean,* 1827); *A Life of Sheridan,* 1825; the friend of Byron, he destroyed the manuscripts of the latter's memoirs, and gave an apologetic colouring to his biography (*The Letters and Journals of Lord Byron,* 1830). He also edited Byron's works (1832–5), and died in 1852. *Poetical Works,* ed. by Godley, 1910; *Selected Poems,* by Falkiner, 1903. *Memoirs,* etc., ed. by Russell, 1856. See studies by Symington (1880), Vallat (Paris, 1886), Brémond, 1904; Gwynn (English Men of Letters, 1905); Baldensperger, *Moore et Vigny* (*Mod. Lang. Review,* vol. i., 1906); Thomas, *Moore en France,* 1911.

Lalla Rookh is accompanied by a prose commentary, in which the verve of Moore disports itself in numberless allusions to his time; indeed with him mockery is never very far removed from the most gorgeous play of imagination. The charm of his nature is due in great part to this Irish versatility, which delights in the close interplay of slyness and sentiment. He is one of the masters of political satire. After some unhappy attempts in the solemn style of the eighteenth century, he found his true vein, in a familiar manner free from all vulgarity. *The Fudge Family in Paris,* for instance, is irresistibly funny; and the comic inventiveness which unfolds itself in these poems of free movement, of a form and measure pleasantly popular, at the expense both of national prejudices and of the ponderous dogmatism on which was founded the imperious order of the "Holy Alliance," often attains a high artistic worth through its accuracy of observation as through the precise neatness of the form.

There are yet other sides to Moore's talent; as the editor and biographer of Byron he is still entitled to recognition; but it is in his capacity of elegiac poet, and creator of liquid sonorities, the evocator of an East at once pagan and Christian, that the poet has left the deepest mark upon his time. *The Loves of the Angels* could well give delight to an age when a new spirit of moral audacity was beginning to take an eager interest in obscure religious myths and fallen angels. Here, also, the poet's talent remains striking, and was even more so with his contemporaries. Lamartine and Vigny, in particular, among the French Romanticists, bear witness to the influence exercised by Moore.

Apart from Rogers and Moore, this period is rich in poets who are of a clearly inferior order, but are saved from oblivion through some individual accent, some occasional flash of personality; as for example the peasant poet, John Clare,[1] in whom a remarkably spontaneous feeling for Nature creates for itself a form that is unfortunately less fresh; Mrs. Hemans,[2] whose success testifies to the very strong fascination which healthy and simple emotions still exerted over the general public in a romantic age; Charles Jeremiah Wells[3] and George Darley,[4] who like many of their contemporaries illustrate the magnetic attraction which the dramatic models, the imagination and the style of Elizabethan literature possessed in those days; lastly, William Combe,[1] James and Horace Smith,[2] who reveal, in their successful parodies of the first Romanticists, the persistence of irony, and the need for rational moderation, which the exhaustion of sensibility will soon call upon to take their revenge.

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[1] 1793–1864; *Poems*, etc., 1820; *The Village Minstrel*, 1821. *Poems by Clare,* ed. by Symons, 1908; *Poems,* selected and edited by Blunden, etc., 1920.

[2] 1793–1835; *The Domestic Affections*, 1812; *The Forest Sanctuary*, 1826.

[3] 1800–1879; *Joseph and His Brethren*, 1824; new edn. revised, 1876.

[4] 1795–1846; *Errors of Ecstasie*, 1822; *Sylvia*, 1827; *Nepenthe*, 1835. See Book VI. chap. iv. sect. 3.

2. Essayists and Critics: Lamb, Leigh Hunt, Hazlitt, De Quincey.—Charles Lamb[3] is wholly bound up with the inner history of the first generation of Romanticism; a judicious friend, an enthusiast in literature, he encourages and guides the efforts of the Lake poets; he himself is a poet, with a note of moving simplicity and tender effusion which relates him to Wordsworth. His life of retirement is not without its tragic shocks, its long and cruel periods of anxiety; he fights to save his sister from madness, and himself comes dangerously near the threshold of insanity, actually overstepping it on at least one occasion. His natural tastes make him dwell in the realms of imagination and dreams, while his artistic soul belongs to the past. A highly sensitive disposition lays him open to all the tremors of the heart, and his work is a varied meditation on the sad mystery of time and change. His nature seemed attuned, as it were beforehand, to the most pathetic chords of the new literature, and his lot afforded him ample opportunity of being in all sincerity, and by virtue of his experience, the vehement echo of human suffering.

He was anything but that. While his genius has all the emotions, the curious and fanciful touches of Romanticism, it has neither its passion nor its fever. A silent modesty, verging on the heroic, curbs the over-effusive expression of his feelings. And a certain fine and subtle element, diffused in his thoughts, saves them from any untoward display of intensity, leading them back irresistibly to a supple sense of exact fitness. This essential element is humour, with which no writer was ever so intimately and deeply permeated. The psychological quality of this mental attitude to life—made up of an attentive playfulness, of the expert handling of all the shades of sentiment—harmonizes with a discreet and restrained tenderness; but bringing with it a lucid consciousness, a self-possession, a sense of relative values, together with an accurate power of observation, it transforms the romanticism of Lamb by enriching it. This romanticism is thus divested of the exclusive ardour of imagination and heart, without which it cannot be said to exist in its pure state. Lamb's humour represents an original revenge of personality over circumstance, through which, in a romantic age, a mind which still belongs to its time transcends it, and joins up with other times. His art exhausts and reconciles the aromas of very different flowerings in literature; and along with that of the Renaissance, we feel in it the persisting flavour of classicism.

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[1] 1741–1823; *Three Tours of Dr. Syntax,* 1812–21.

[2] *Rejected Addresses,* 1812.

[3] Charles Lamb, born in London, in 1775, of lower middle-class family, studied at Christ's Hospital, where he knew Coleridge; entering the service of the South Sea, then of the East India Company, he led the quiet life of a clerk, which, however, had one great crisis: in a fit of madness his sister Mary killed their mother (1796); Lamb sacrificed himself for many years and with tender care managed to save the mental condition of his unfortunate sister. His literary friendships, his reading, his keen liking for old-time writers, filled his life. His short poems appeared with those of Coleridge and Charles Lloyd (1797–8; see above, Book V. chap. i. sect. 5); he published *A Tale of Rosamund Gray,* 1798; a tragedy, *John Woodvil,* 1802; had a farce performed, *Mr. H.,* 1807. His *Tales from Shakespeare* (1807), written in collaboration with his sister, have become a children's classic. Then came his *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets, Who Lived about the Time of Shakespeare,* 1808. Lamb contributed essays, critical articles, etc., to different reviews; from 1820 onwards there appeared in the *London Magazine* the series of essays signed *"Elia,"* collected in a volume (1st Series, 1823; 2nd, 1833). Lamb died in 1834. *Works,* ed. by Ainger, 1900; *Works of Charles and Mary Lamb,* ed. by Lucas, 1905; ed. by Hutchinson, 1908; *Essays of Elia,* ed. by Thompson, 1913–14; *Miscellaneous Essays,* idem, 1921. See *Life* of Lamb by Ainger (English Men of Letters), 1882; Lucas, 1905; new edn., 1921. Studies by W. Pater (*Appreciations*), 1889; Woodberry, 1900; Derocquigny (*Ch. L., sa vie et son œuvre*), 1904.

Nothing is more truly individual than this delightful and at the same time scholarly fusion. Lamb's personality is unique. The essay, a form which provides him with his favourite mode of expression, becomes in his hands the artificial but precious instrument of a constant self-revelation. The fictitious figure of Elia is the main, but not the only centre, of that secret magnetism which organizes the reflections, the memories of books and things, the diversity of opinions and characters, the comedy and drama of each day, around one theme, namely, the particular reaction of a soul to life. Without openly taking himself as a subject, without touching upon any aspect of his own experience but to transform it, Lamb is for ever speaking of himself. It is not a case of vanity, but simply that he relates what he knows best. The past like the present of his self offers him a fund of inexhaustible matter, which he freely exploits; one part of his being dominates and judges the other. The subjectivism of his method bears no resemblance to that of the great fanatical egoists; one discerns in it the shrewd detachment of a critical mind, aware of the illusion implied in all personal preoccupation, and infusing a spirit of irony even into the inevitable self-pity that always accompanies the contemplation of one's past.

The impersonal and moralizing type of essay which Johnson had bequeathed to literature thus returns, beyond the sober and mixed formula of the *Spectator,* to the example of Montaigne. But Lamb is not a moralist nor a psychologist; his object is not research, analysis or confession; he is, above all, an artist. He has no aim save the reader's pleasure, and his own. If we find contact with his work to be both refining and elevating, it is through an influence which hides itself, and acts indirectly. On the contrary, everything is adjusted with a view to our intellectual delectation; emotion itself is a means, a touch which enhances and diversifies the picture. Never were such intentions more complex in their range, more delightful in their combined working.

Each essay is a little wonder in which fancy and wit embroider the most unexpected variations upon a background of reflection and anecdote. Humour here is diffused everywhere; it is like an atmosphere which heightens and multiplies the particular effect of each device. Lamb is amusing, paradoxical, ingenious, touching, poetic, eloquent; and the impression keeps with us that he is all these in turn, without ever being but these and nothing else; that a detached and versatile consciousness allows him to gauge each attitude, its scope and limits; and thus procures for us in each case not only the satisfaction of enjoying a mood, but also that of seeing around and beyond it. The solemn seriousness with which comic elements are worked out and thus set off is but one of the forms, the most easily understood, of this essential duality of mind. The purpose of sly insincerity and, in a fashion, of trickery which is most often that of the writer, is reflected in numberless ways through his style. The ordering, the discontinuity or logic in the development, the tone, the choice of words, constitute as many notes in this infinitely varied scale of expressions, which ranges from the pun to the loftiest eloquence or suggestion, and which shows the writer's supreme art in his self-control, in his power almost always to stop in time. Lamb can be simple at will; and his most novel effects remain free from laboriousness or affectation. Still more astonishing than the fertility of his verve is his sureness of taste.

The reason is that he possesses the most delicately practised critical judgment. The finesse of his literary perception comes from a culture, both ancient and modern, less erudite than it is deep and permeating, which reaches the innermost fibres of his mental being. There is a measure of originality even in this humanism; it is coloured by strong preferences and avowed partialities.

In his appreciation of literary works, Lamb remains a man; his whole personality becomes involved, and his moods play by no means the least important part. There is supreme sharpness in these impressions; they adopt most often the scale of accepted values; but they also deviate from it in order to correct it by the boldness of a novel insight, or enrich it with paradoxical shades in which his temperament gracefully disports itself.

These reactions, as a whole, constitute a doctrine. Lamb takes sides; he is a vigorous supporter of Romanticism, inasmuch as his passionate admiration returns, beyond the classical school, to the old-time authors of the Renaissance and the seventeenth century. He is full of a love, fed on familiar acquaintance, not only for the Elizabethan dramatists, but also for the masters whose archaism is a bar to enjoyment, and who are no longer read. His style is steeped in their manner; his art assimilates and recreates, through transposed means, but which retain something of their primitive character, the delightfully learned gravity of Sir Thomas Browne, the naïvety of Izaak Walton. The tales in which he and his sister have simplified the dramas of Shakespeare remain a favourite reading with children; the *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets* stimulated the sympathetic interest which was beginning to be felt in Beaumont and Fletcher, Ford, Massinger and Chapman; he retrieved from oblivion the names of some authors, such as Wither. Lamb's action in the field of criticism was diffuse and truly fruitful; he contributed more than any other in reviving the claims of writers who are perhaps the most truly national England can show, and in combining this distant influence with the living and present spirit of literature.

His letters are charming; much more spontaneous than his essays, and of a quality both of thought and of verve which is equivalent, if not equal, they reveal the bond existing between his entire work and his deeper personality, as well as the natural truth of the vein from which his writings have sprung.

In a perspective which shows it between Lamb and Hazlitt, the figure of Leigh Hunt[1] would appear at the first glance to lack relief. Numerous traits go to compose it, none of which has a master's decisive strength. But when more closely examined, it becomes attractive, and assumes its true character, which is average and representative. This so-called Radical has moderate instincts, this doctrinarian is a generous idealist, whose principles are nearly all reducible to sentiments. The political, social and religious ideas of Hunt express the needs of a sincere heart; he is eager to restore in society and in men's souls the order which he seemed to threaten; what he does is to justify it, purify and establish it on the more solid foundation of spiritual values. What there is of a diffuse humanitarianism and of a moral faith in the modern

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[1] James Henry Leigh Hunt, born near London in 1784, the son of a clergyman, studied at Christ's Hospital, wrote at an early age verses, critical essays, and founded with his brother John, a review, the *Examiner,* where he upheld Radical ideas; was imprisoned for two years (1813–15) for attacking the Regent. He published poems (*The Feast of the Poets,* 1814; *The Story of Rimini,* 1816; *Foliage,* 1818), edited the *Indicator* (1819–21), sojourned in Italy (1822–25), where he launched with the help of Byron, a periodical, the *Liberal,* which proved a failure. Of careless habits, he led an unsettled life until his death in 1859; an assiduous writer, at once journalist (in *the Companion, the Tatler, Leigh Hunt's London Journal, the Edinburgh Review,* etc.); poet (*Captain Sword and Captain Pen,* 1835; *The Palfrey,* 1842, etc.); critic (editions of Wycherley, Congreve, etc., and Sheridan, with introductions, 1840; collections of selected texts: *Imagination and Fancy,* 1844; *Wit and Humour,* 1846); novelist (*Sir Ralph Eshar,* 1832); and dramatist (*The Legend of Florence,* 1840). He left an *Autobiography* 1850 (ed. by Ingpen, 1903); and a confession (*The Religion of the Heart,* 1853). His complete works have not yet appeared in a collected edition; *Poetical Works,* ed. by Th. Hunt, 1840; edn. Milford, 1922. *Selected Essays and Poems,* ed. by Johnson, 1891; *Essays,* ed. by Symons, 1903; *Dramatic Essays,* ed. by Archer and Lowe, 1894. Biography by Monkhouse (Great Writers), 1893; studies by Saintsbury (*Essays in English Literature*), 1890; R. B. Johnson, 1896; Miller (*L. Hunt's Relations with Byron, Shelley and Keats*), 1910.

English mind, we find symbolized to a very large extent by this writer who, as the son of a cleric, became an impassioned advocate of democracy and free religion, and who, in certain respects, adumbrates the social spirit of Dickens and Kingsley. Far from being a revolutionary, or a man of exceptional temperament, he takes his place in the central line of the durable instincts of a people.

His Romanticism is rather superficial. In his youth he experiences a period of unrest and morbid disquietude; but he very quickly recovers, regaining with the assurance of moral health the sense of balance. He loves the green English countryside, and describes with intensity of feeling the beauty of its fields; he has a keen perception for the concrete aspects of existence, and can recreate them through his imagination. This sure and joyous hold upon reality translates itself into an exuberance which scandalized the public, and provoked a charge of animality and paganism. But Hunt remains a Christian; and if any trace of commonness can be found in him, he is free from the slightest indelicacy. Without being a daring innovator, he opens up new paths. Through his fund of fresh sensibility, his salutary independence towards the forms which time has consecrated, and his intimate knowledge of Chaucer and Spenser, he is able to renovate the technique of the rhymed line of five beats; he does away with the rigid mould in which the heroic couplet was imprisoned, giving it back ease and suppleness, a liberty in the inner breaks suggestive either of trivial familiarity, or of dramatic and lyrical liveliness. But *The Story of Rimini* is not without its faults, and they are just those whose influence can be traced most perceptibly in Keats. The best of Hunt's poetry is to be found in the rhythmic prose which he wrote at times, and which is of a richly evocative quality. Certain of his pages have the cadenced harmony, the brilliance and the impressionist eloquence, which De Quincey was about to develop to a high degree of artistic perfection.

In other directions, again, others after him went still further. He freed the essay from a too strait-laced tradition, brought it closer to the realm of journalism, and made it an instrument of unlimited resources. But the effects he drew from it are not of the first order. In his writings of this nature, which were abundant, varied and a trifle diffuse, the estimable merits of the style, verve and humour suffer from inevitable and crushing comparisons. He inaugurated theatrical criticism, only to be surpassed in this field by Hazlitt. Frequently at least do we come upon pages of greater force, which arrest our attention, reveal a man in the writer, as well as throw light upon his times. The critic in Hunt possesses intuition and correct taste; he also loves the old authors, and sets the example of a sensibility naturally adapted to the expressions of the national genius which classicism had tried to disown. But he has not these gifts in a supreme degree. The book which has most chance of preserving the name of Hunt is in all probability his *Autobiography*, a work full of charm which relates an interesting career, all bound up with the history of a generation of great writers.

Hazlitt[1] embodies all that is personal; his is a lonely spirit, in open or secret conflict with the world, in which his unflinching sincerity, his sharp, examining eye, disturb all the values set up by convention and compromise. There is a touch of Rousseau in him, an element of suffering pride, a certain misanthropy; but he does not lose his self-control, his sense of balance, even if he lacks the easy unity of a simple soul. For his nature is twofold, and this duality constitutes its richness, as in some measure it does its uneasiness. His outlook is essentially critical, and bears the stamp of religious dissent; it has been formed at the time of the French Revolution, and under the influence of a philosophy of progress through reason. Hazlitt is in certain respects the ally of those intellectual Radicals who, after 1815, revive the cause of vanquished liberty. He believes in the virtue of doctrines, and is ready to stand by the consequences of his principles until the end. But at the same time, his mind is deeply impregnated with Romanticism. He knows and experiences the fecund powers of intuitive knowledge, the limits of logical intelligence. A strong and direct sense of the inner life, a penetrating sympathy which lays bare to his gaze the secrets of other souls, such are the gifts from which Hazlitt's work derives its originality. They imply a consciousness of self that is intensified by a more vivid faculty of imagination and feeling; and belong indeed to the age of Coleridge and Wordsworth.

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[1] William Hazlitt, born in 1778, the son of a Unitarian minister, renounced an ecclesiastical career, took up painting and studied in Paris; but, attracted by intellectual problems, he published treatises on moral philosophy or politics (*Essay on the Principles of Human Action*, 1805; *Free Thoughts on Public Affairs*, 1806; *A Reply to the Essay on Population by the Rev. Malthus*, 1807, etc.); then devoting his whole attention to journalism and literature, he collaborated in the *Morning Chronicle*, the *Edinburgh Review*, the *Examiner*, etc.; published several collections of essays (*The Round Table*, 1817; *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*, 1817; *A View of the English Stage*, 1818; *Political Essays*, 1819); gathered in volume form his critical lectures: *Lectures on the English Poets*, 1818; *Lectures on the English Comic Writers*, 1819; *Lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth*, 1820. Mention may also be made of the following among his very abundant miscellaneous writings: *Table Talk*, 1821–2; *Characteristics*, 1823; *Liber Amoris*,

He should be ranked with the critics of life. As such, he shows insight, and virility rather than bitterness; no one was more alive than Hazlitt to the joys of independence, of art, and of the truth which is freely sought and tasted; the courage of a proud soul is the diffuse lesson which emanates from his writings; without illusion, he draws from human things, and more from Nature in her untouched beauty, a solace which goes to nurture his energy, and strengthens him in his resolutions of unwavering patience. His political ideas, and a certain tone of intellectuality, link up the man in him with a rationalism which is persistent, or which tends to reappear. His *Liber Amoris* takes its place among the books which sought to cure Romanticism by giving expression to it. It is the study of a sentimental illusion, and of the weakness of judgment which this entails. It is, no less, the study of a "case" of feminine duplicity, of an atrophy of feeling, in a spirit of cruel realism which heralds Thackeray. But although this short novel is enacted in an atmosphere of sober irony, it nevertheless is fraught with the fever of painful passion; and here, as elsewhere, the moralist in Hazlitt works less by way of analysis than by flashes of perception, whether from partial gleams a blinding certitude be gradually evolved, or light burst forth all at once. Each perspective that he opens up on existence is thickly strewn with these sudden revelations, which turn inside out the artificial setting of our lives, upset the order of appearances, and disclose the truth which none desires or is able to see. Hazlitt's moral code is that of frankness; and this with him is the outcome of an unerring, bold, quick faculty of penetrating the spiritual depth of experience.

He is indebted to the same faculty for his rare virtue as a literary critic. Each of his portraits is a divination; with one quick movement he places himself at the centre of a personality, and recreates it through a sympathy which closely grasps the contours of its characteristics. This plastic comprehension of a human being partakes somewhat of dramatic invention, and indeed resembles it. It is guided by the whole substance of a work, of a moral and physical

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1823; *The Spirit of the Age*, 1825; *The Plain Speaker*, 1826; *Life of Napoleon Buonaparte*, 1828–30. After his death (1830) appeared *Literary Remains* (1836), etc. *Works*, ed. by Waller and Glover, 1906; *Dramatic Essays*, ed. by Archer and Lowe, 1895. *Essays*, ed. by Zeitlin, 1913; *Selected Essays*, ed. by Sampson, 1917; *Liber Amoris*, ed. by Le Gallienne, 1893. See biographies by W. C. Hazlitt, 1867; A. Birrell (English Men of Letters), 1902; Douady (*Vie de W. H., l'essayiste*), 1907; Howe, *Life of W. H.*, 1922; studies by Saintsbury (*Essays in English Literature*, 1890; *History of Criticism*, 1904); Douady (*Liste chronologique des œuvres de W. H.*), 1907.

individuality, of a temperament; and the keen impressionism of Hazlitt, nurtured by the study of moods, is rather similar to the method of Sainte-Beuve; less supple and minute, less enveloping, it has often more of an untamed vigour. So frequently is his attention focussed upon the hidden side of souls, that one feels it is governed by a constant intuition of the subconscious; and his methods of investigation, with the emphasis they lay upon the semi-deceptions of the mind by itself, and the involuntary revenge of sinful nature, examples of which are to be seen at all moments in literature and society, are practically equivalent to the psycho-analytical studies of the present day.

Hazlitt is not infallible. He errs through his preconceptions, or through some mental incompatibility; he is not open to all kinds of mental characteristics with the same broad-mindedness, nor is he free from prejudice. Among all writers, he has not done justice to Shelley. But, if his work is judged as a whole, he has a breadth of outlook, a catholicity of taste which are remarkable. He has spoken in a better way than anyone before him of many a Shakespearean figure; he is familiar with the Renaissance, and in close sympathy with it; while, on the other hand, he loves and understands the comedy-writers of the Restoration; and further, he allots to Pope and his school a place among the active influences of the past. Indeed he is not bound to any set programme or to a party. His interpretations of the writers of his time are striking in their finesse and felicity of perception. He it was who traced the first roads, marked out the vantage points, and gauged the heights on the virgin soil of Romanticism; and almost in every case, his literary judgment remains that of to-day; he anticipates the future, and sees with the eyes of posterity.

The somewhat discursive manner of his writings is a strong point with him, as well as a weakness. His style is forcible and spontaneous; it progresses by means of successive traits which issue from one and the same central act of perception, subjected to the continuous light of consciousness, and examined in turn under all its aspects. Such a device ensures movement, sincerity and a telling force of style. But this discontinuity in an order which is wholly organic is not only happy. It gives no safety against repetition and prolixity; at times it wearies the mind that cannot readily perceive the logical sequence of thought, the point of departure or the goal. At bottom extremely English and national, Hazlitt's critical method finds in the insufficiency of composition the fault of its quality.

By the tolerance of his tastes, Hazlitt already rose above the plane of combative literature; he heralded the passing over to a synthetic age, in which Romanticism, accepted and assimilated, took its place among the legitimate expressions of British genius. This transitional character is still more clearly marked in De Quincey.[1] Here, the critical phase really succeeds the creative; and this criticism, animated as it is itself by the new spirit, turns round upon it in order to judge it with a secret malice.

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[1] Thomas De Quincey, born in Manchester in 1785, son of a merchant, traced his descent from a noble Anglo-Norman family, but without very certain foundation; in 1802 he fled from school, wandering about for several months, and leading a lonely life in London; returning to a normal mode of living, he spent some time at Oxford, then attached himself to the Lake poets and lived near them. In 1804 he fell a victim to opium, and became increasingly addicted to the drug, only partially throwing off the habit towards 1848. Mingled with the literary society of Edinburgh, he collaborated in Scottish and London reviews. In 1821 there began to appear his *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (revised in 1856). He published a novel, *Klosterheim,* 1832; *The Logic of Political Economy,* 1844; but devoted himself mainly, until his death in 1859, to essay-writing and occasional compositions. *Collected Writings,* ed. by Masson, 1890; *Confessions,* ed. by Masson, 1904; *Essays,* ed. by Whibley, 1904; *Literary Criticism,* ed. by Darbishire, 1909. See biographies by Japp, 1890; Masson (English Men of Letters), 1881; Hogg (*De Quincey and His Friends,* 1895); studies by Saintsbury (*Essays in English Literature*).

This is not to say that in De Quincey Romanticism does not remain deeply rooted in the very fibres of temperament. His childhood, his youth are crossed and recrossed by adventurous episodes which betray a moral originality, almost bordering on an unsettled state of mind. But on the other hand, the intellectual side of his nature has the gift, the need of clarity; if he lives his Romanticism, he looks at himself in the process of living it, and with a critical analysis passes judgment upon it. Above all, De Quincey lacks that fruitful vigour, and that simple energy, which help to carry on around him the work of the great creators.

His literary personality organizes itself round this trait. It is the case of a repressed Romanticism, whether by reason of a psychological duality, and critical lucidity, or because of a powerlessness to create, in which the nervous restlessness which was the effect as well as the cause of the craving for opium may have counted for something. This repression was all the more conscious, as he was closely acquainted with the greatest poets of his time, measured his talent by theirs, and in his contact with them gained an exact cognizance of his weakness, as of the gift of penetration which gave him back a superiority of a kind. Curbed as it was, his need for expression and compensation sought an outlet by indirect channels. The *Confessions of an Opium Eater* show in a poetical prose the transposition of an incomplete lyricism; the *Reminiscences of the English Lake Poets* reveal in this devout disciple the malice of a detached clear-sightedness.

In the *Confessions,* De Quincey makes use of the romantic elements of his life; he obeys the instinct of self-revelation, which literature had prompted; incapable as he is of sublimating his experience into poetry through a process of pure spiritualization, he idealizes it by clothing it in an imaginative and dramatic garb. Thus he comes to exploit the morbid vein which, since the time of Rousseau, has never ceased to run at the centre of European Romanticism, and from which only the generation of the English Lake poets had freed itself by an effort of moral sanity. Coleridge had failed in this effort; De Quincey, sharing his defeat, seeks like him forgetfulness in an artificial paradise. He is therefore in harmony with the second generation of poets, who are more entirely open to the impulses of instinct and desire. The contemporary of Byron, Shelley and Keats, he bears likewise the stamp of unrest. But while their feverish ardour spends itself in emotions and ecstasies which are yet real, and which have an object in view, Romanticism with De Quincey recoils upon itself, discovers that it is incapable of entering into contact with life, and under the influence of a nerve stimulant gives itself scope in the visions of an inner world.

Opium was his master, and paralyzed his creative imagination by diverting it into the realm of dreams. He therefore drew the matter for his art from this very slavery, and recounted in an inspired tone the sins and glories of opium. Out of a rather futile prudence, he claims to instruct the reader, to put him on his guard; but no one is deceived; the complacent theme of the book is the dangerous and enchanting exaltation which a mighty poison, full of all the witchcraft of the East, can awaken in a human soul. It is this imaginative impression that De Quincey above all desires to create. In place of a simple narrative of facts, we find substituted a more or less voluntary idealization, by means of which the artist fashions and organizes a general evocation. With its repentant notes, and moments of timidity, this confession tends to be nothing other than the seductive portrayal of an intoxicating intensity of mental life,

1890; Leslie Stephen (*Hours in a Library*), 1892; A. Symons (*Studies in Prose and Verse*), 1904; Arvède Barine (*Névroses*, etc.), 1898; Dunn (*De Quincey's Relation to German Literature*), 1901; Salt (*De Quincey*), 1904; Durant (*De Quincey*, etc., *in Their Relations to the Germans; Mod. Lang. Assoc. of America*), 1907.

even if such rapture has despair lurking in its wake. All sense of objective truth is lost in the continually re-occurring fits of ecstatic dizziness; but so lucid is the mind of the self-analyzing victim, that the picture he has drawn of these dreams still preserves a documentary value for the student of mental pathology.

The story as he tells it is bathed in an atmosphere of fatality and mystery, produced and maintained by an art which is fertile in resources. In order to describe the sombre destiny, to which De Quincey shows no displeasure that his soul should be a prey, he makes a bold use of the whole scale of poetic effects. His prose becomes animated, warms up, acquires a rhythmic flow, and assumes the colour as well as the sonority of the highest descriptive eloquence. Visions as strikingly brilliant as they are terrible or enigmatical, unfold themselves to the accompaniment of an incomparable verbal music, new as much as suggestive at that time, and whose only failing is a slightly too visible artifice. A writer of rare quality, and in certain respects original, De Quincey is not one of the great masters of style because the instrument he uses is not entirely in harmony with his nature, lending itself only to an imperfect literary sincerity. Here, and in other pieces of the same tone (*Ladies of Sorrow, Daughter of Lebanon,* etc.), we find traces of an affected language, which impair an otherwise genuine gift of expression.

The rest of his work offers a keen interest, although the sign of a secret failing of the writer's intellectual will-power never does wholly disappear. His many-sided activity never concentrates strongly enough upon an object. His analytical bend leads De Quincey to the study of political economy; capable of following the play of ideas, and won over by the prestige of German metaphysics, he reads Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Jean Paul, and makes a name for himself among the small group of men who in England hold the key to transcendental philosophy. But he squanders this privilege in ephemeral articles, with no great profit. It is when dealing with subjects closer at hand that the critic in him is seen at his best. This intimate friend of the Lake poets provides us with a picture of them more familiar and precise than that in which others gave expression above all to their respectful admiration. The portraits he sketches testify to a keen penetration, aided by a complex community of feelings in which there enter some sympathy, a craving for truth, and also an obscure malignity; by a perception of the unconscious side of high and noble personalities, that is the more unerring, as the critic has more clearly grasped in his own self the moral failings of mankind.

Here again, he has all that goes to the making of talent, and almost to the making of a poet; he can see and depict Nature, enliven a tale, stir up by a happy choice of words a living group of impressions; but he has neither the perfect simplicity of mind nor that of style; and the opinions expressed in his entire critical work, while very often of a shrewd or ingenious quality, do not possess that unerring and safe accuracy which betokens a forgetfulness of self, and an impassioned desire for nothing but justice.

3. Landor and Peacock.—Like Hazlitt, Landor[1] is a lonely spirit, of an even more retiring disposition, and less involved in the struggles of his time. The contemporary of Lamb, he traverses the whole of the Romantic period without ever merging into it, and he survives it until the middle of the following age. His long career links up the declining classicism of the eighteenth century with that in which the nineteenth was to seek a new standard of balance.

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[1] Walter Savage Landor, born at Warwick in 1775, of middle-class family, studied at Rugby, was sent down from Oxford for his Republican ideas (1793); inheriting independent means, he wrote *Poems* (1795); an epic, *Gebir,* 1798; *Simonidea,* 1806, etc.; a tragedy, *Count Julian,* 1812. After several adventurous episodes, he settled in Italy, where he spent the greater part of his life. He published *Imaginary Conversations,* 1824–29; *Examination of Shakespeare,* etc., 1834; *Pericles and Aspasia,* 1836; *Pentameron,* 1837; *Hellenics,* 1847; *Heroic Idylls,* 1863, and died in Florence in 1864. *Works,* ed. by Forster, 1876; ed. by Crump, 1893; *Letters,* ed. by Wheeler, 1899; *Selections,* ed. by Colvin, 1882; ed. by Clymer, 1898; *Imaginary Conversations,* selections by Cavenagh, 1914. See biog-

His whole intellectual nature marks him out for isolation. By his opinions, no doubt, he takes sides in political conflicts; he is in harmony with the second generation of poets, shares their idealistic sympathies with the rights of peoples and nationalities. But the independent course of his life removes his aggressive liberalism, except one active episode, from all contact with actuality. On the other hand, his is the temperament of the scrupulous and somewhat haughty artist; in no way did he seek popularity, finding pleasure in reckoning upon the tardy favour of a select few. Above all, the inspiration animating his work is restrained, controlled by the search for an intellectual, austere, and somewhat cold perfection.

It is too simple to say that Landor is a classicist. He carries Romanticism within himself, in so far as no one of developed sensibility could remain immune from so deep a movement of souls. Even when he subordinates the new and daring flights of imaginative emotion to the severe discipline of an elaborate form, he feels and imagines with a freedom in intensity which implies a decisive emancipation. His personality is wholly impregnated by a secret ardour which sustains the most lucid efforts of his expression. With him, as with Keats, the love for ancient beauty is an entirely modern inspiration. A transitional and synthetic writer, in whom the general progress of literature becomes more quickly discernible, he heralds the fusion of complex elements, which a Browning or an Arnold will more definitely endeavour to realize. It is towards the future that Landor looks, rather than towards the past.

Of this he is not himself aware. His religion in literature is that of an ideal attained long ago, which the artist must make his single aim. The influence of the models of antiquity sways him entirely. His humanism was never that of the scholar; he has a better and more direct knowledge of the Latin than of the Greek writers. But the stimulating effect produced upon him by the ancient classics decides his vocation and guides his taste; even his inventive faculty is held in bond by the past. What did come between his work and the general public, what deprived it of any wide field of action, is the fact that it did not draw its inspiration straight from the passions of a living humanity. A purely intellectual and somewhat artificial motive is inseparable from his creative impulses. Despite the genuine pride of his personal disposition, Landor remains the disciple of a stoical virtue and of a strong eloquence in which are to be recognized the civic and oratorical examples of Rome.

He is not, however, a mere dealer in imitation work. There is actual vigour in his personality, which, without constraint, strikes a note akin to that of Roman history and morals. His artistic sense inclines towards regular and well-defined forms, of precise relief and devoid of mystery. Landor's classicism is not bookish, but natural and spontaneous. He attempts in all sincerity to clothe thoughts which are majestic, but rife with the emotions and turmoils of a restless age, in a language that has the solidity and the polish of marble.

This effort exercised itself both in verse and in prose. It is in prose, however, that Landor has shown the greatest mastery, and obtained the most poetical effects. His early poem, *Gebir,* has a strange and arid grandeur; of Eastern inspiration, like the *Thalaba* of Southey, it gives evidence of a just instinct of the regeneration that must come by way of simple truth. But the abstract style of the eighteenth century is in it a persisting factor; and

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raphies by Forster, 1869; Colvin (English Men of Letters), 1881; studies by Houghton, *Monographs,* 1873; Evans, 1892; Leslie Stephen (*Hours in a Library*), 1892; Saintsbury (*Essays in English Literature,* 2nd Series), 1895; Bradley (*The Early Poems of Landor*), 1914.

striking passages cannot redeem a radical absence of life and reality. Shorter poems, Greek idylls, and stanzas as clearly cut as old-time cameos, have more felicity of touch, a purity of contour that is often charming, a freshness of imagination and delineation. The blank verse of Landor, full of the memory of Milton, has force and an ample measure; but nowhere does his poetry offer the character of an inevitable form; while the cadence of his prose, more supple and harmonious, is more naturally adapted to the movement of his thought.

The *Imaginary Conversations* are odd works, and of a rather mongrel kind. In their substance are contained the fragmentary sketches of what might have been historical novels or dramas, but with nothing of the continuity and system which a regular art would have demanded. Their strongest interest lies in the revelation and contrasting of souls; and these psychological dialogues are fundamentally inspired by the same spirit of moral curiosity, of philosophic emotion, and of intelligent allowance for the diversity of things, which will produce the "monologues" of Browning. But the effort towards objectivity is in them less robust and sustained. Landor has not yet consciously outgrown the romantic phase of direct self-expression. He obviously passes judgments, and takes sides; his portraits represent personal reactions, and their tone is at times intensified to the point of violence by an irony which seeks in vain to temper itself through an infusion of humour.

The quality of the mind which interprets and brings back to life these great figures of the past, from the remotest times of antiquity up to the present, and which calls up round each a setting of civilization or of Nature, together with the force, the brilliance, the masterly skill displayed in so many scenes, episodes and landscapes, lend the collection the value of a work unequal, but which forces admiration. The venture of so paradoxical an undertaking has to a great extent been a success. It must be added that the merit of the form makes one forget the deficiencies of this type of writing. Landor's language is chosen and rhythmic, instinct with a subtle music which is not that of verse, and which, through the accuracy of a delicate adaptation to the feeling, suggests the impression of regularity that the structure of metre usually produces. Of varied character, this fine harmony is most often dignified, sententious and noble, just like the favourite tone of the writer; but this nobleness is compatible with all shades of emotion, moments of simple and serious familiarity, intervals of playful relaxing, and ecstatic and inspired meditations, in which Landor, more surely than De Quincey, reaches the supreme heights of English prose.

With Peacock,[1] the duality of a divided nature develops openly into an aggressive freedom as regards Romanticism. His is not only the detachment of an observer who watches the flood of impassioned literature pass before his eyes; his look betrays the amusement of an agile, critical intelligence. A man of transition as well as Landor, he is, above all, in reaction against his time; and if he announces the future, it is because he links himself up with the past. Through his turn of mind, he is akin to the line of eighteenth century rationalists. His outlook is cosmopolitan; he derides British prejudices; like *Hudibras*, he quotes Rabelais and Voltaire; while in social, moral and political matters he prides himself upon the fact that he thinks with a boldness unrestrained by any sentiment. He entertains radical opinions, which become attenuated with the passing of years, without being destroyed; his arrow-like comments, shot at the robust conservatism of British instinct, have a cruel force of penetration. On the other hand, he loved Shelley, if he hated the Lake poets; he is merciless towards the economists and liberal doctrinaires; in spite of all, his life and work cannot be separated from the triumph of sentiment, and the chief current of this age. Through both life and work there runs a romantic vein, which spreads itself out at first, and then, being energetically repressed, hides itself, without ceasing to be recognizable. It is as an adversary that he most frequently handles the characteristic themes of the new literature; however, he shows, while dealing with them, all the shades of feeling that range from an ironical hostility to indulgence and even to full sympathy. His words are sometimes those of a writer who takes up the Romantic cue for the purpose of deriding it, but who is eventually caught at his own game. The short poems scattered through his prose narratives offer, in addition to the successful display of a racy, mocking verve, notes of charm and emotion which are unmistakable.

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[1] Thomas Love Peacock, born in 1785 at Weymouth, of middle-class family, was educated privately and passed the greater part of his long life in the service of the East India Company; published verse (*Rhododaphne*, 1818, etc.), novels: *Headlong Hall*, 1816; *Melincourt*, 1817; *Nightmare Abbey*, 1818; *Maid Marion*, 1822; *The Misfortunes of Elphin*, 1829; *Crotchet Castle*, 1831; *Gryll Grange*, 1861; he died in 1866, leaving dramatic works (published by Young, 1910), and a correspondence with Shelley, etc. (ed. by Garnett, 1910). *Works*, ed. by Cole, 1873; *Prose Works*, ed. by Garnett, 1891; *Poems*, ed. by Johnson, 1906; *P.'s Four Ages of Poetry, Shelley's Defence of Poetry*, etc., ed. by Brett-Smith, 1921. See biography by Van Doren, 1911; studies by Saintsbury (*Essays in English Literature*, 1890); Freeman (*Th. L. Peacock, a Critical Study*), 1911; Paul (*The Novels of P., Stray Leaves*), 1906.

His novels are almost pure fantasies; the logic which holds sway in them is that of paradox or jesting. Certain elements are indeed borrowed from reality, and the taste which selected them has freshness and piquancy, as well as a keen sense of the typical and picturesque detail; Peacock, in his own way, manages to be a painter of manners and a psychologist. But these materials are assembled with the most supreme indifference to all that may be called rigorous probability or sequence of action. The plot is a mere pretext; the characters, among which are to be found many amusing figures, and several of which answer to actual and well-known personalities, are simply sketches. The body of each work consists of reflections and dialogues. Peacock desires nothing further than to reproduce conversations, directly or indirectly. He has written brilliant scenes in which the ideas, problems, fashions and fads of his time are re-animated and discussed with irresistible liveliness. The whole savours of the philosophical tale in the manner of Voltaire, and of the argument novel in that of Diderot; while certain comic devices, bordering on caricature, recall the English realists of the eighteenth century. A more fundamental resemblance is that which harmonizes the intellectual aroma of this comedy with the works of Meredith's youth. And the style, scholarly and classical to excess, is loaded with an irony which draws delightful effects from a fully conscious and subtle pedanticism.

All this is not the work of a very vigorous creator, even although the mind which reveals itself is sincere and personal. The substance of these novels is at times very thin, which however does not save the form from being at times heavy. The dividing line between farce and humour is not always observed. Sheer impertinence is too often associated with the most fine and suggestive drollery. At bottom, there is a certain inconsistency in Peacock. The unity of his nature, the permanent axis of his mind, are not very easily discernible. He has the conversationalist's brilliant gifts, and a little of his versatility. But some of his remarks have a singularly wide bearing, just as his criticism is often exceptionally scathing. *Headlong Hall* and *Crochet Castle* are still read with keen pleasure; and *Nightmare Abbey* is a little masterpiece in mockery; the satire of Romanticism, then in its heyday, is carried out with a penetrating discernment of its inevitable weaknesses, of the psychological fallacies or the morbid excesses which sully its exalted spontaneity with a secret literary artifice. To all transcendental reveries, and to the cult of the mysterious and the terrifying, Peacock smilingly opposes sound good health. No text more clearly shows the persistence, in certain writers as in the average mass of the nation, of a lucid rational temper which reserves itself, remembers, and abides its time.

To be consulted: *Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. xi. chap. xiii.; vol. xii. chaps. v. vii. viii. ix.; Derocquigny, *Ch. Lamb*, 1904; Elton, *Survey of English Literature, 1780–1830*, 1920; Hazlitt, *The Spirit of the Age*, 1825 (*Works*, ed. by Waller, vol. iv., 1902); Herford, *The Age of Wordsworth*, 1899; Leigh Hunt, *Autobiography*, 1850; H. M. Peacock and M. C. B. Wheeler: *Selected English Essays*, 1911; H. Crabb Robinson, *Diary*, ed. by Sadler, 1869; Salt, *De Quincey*, 1904; Stoddard, *Personal Recollections of Lamb, Hazlitt*, etc., 1903; H. Walker, *The English Essay and Essayists*, 1915; *Modern English Essays*, ed. by E. Rhys, 5 vols., 1922.

BOOK VI

THE SEARCH FOR BALANCE (1832–1875)

CHAPTER I

THE NEW PERIOD—CAUSES AND CHARACTERISTICS

From 1830 onwards, it is more and more evident that a literary transition is developing. And 1832 is the year of a great reform which lays the solid foundation of political democracy, the steady progress of which will coincide with the long reign of Queen Victoria. To the decade which lies between 1830 and 1840 may be traced the beginning of a new age in English literature and society.

Romanticism indeed is not dead; but its creative force is becoming exhausted, and writers now turn in ever-increasing numbers to other sources of inspiration. For the inner movement of minds is taking them away from Romanticism, or robbing it of the fullness of its appeal to them.

The formal doctrines of the Romanticists had never been officially recognized; to the end, they had been opposed by conservative opinion, and their disputed triumph was rather a question of fact than of rights. Besides, only some men with exceptional tempers had proved able to live up to them, while the general public and the bulk of the nation had followed at a distance, or had remained indifferent or hostile. Yet a fashion, a vogue, the prestige of recent sensational works, the scandal that surrounded the name of a Byron, the reprobation called forth by that of a Shelley, no less than the lure of a new and moving beauty, forced on the general public the anxious awareness, if not the love, of a literature whose audacity soared beyond the taste of the crowd. The popular and accepted successes of a Scott or a Moore, like the growing reputation of a Wordsworth, served to add to the mass of influences, which, in spite of all, were creating an atmosphere of general intensity, and gave the impression of unrestricted daring in the quest of literary effects. Thus, the average Englishman was instinctively conscious of the fact that he was participating, either as a willing adherent or as a tolerant onlooker—and this for more than a generation—in a phase of moral life where sensibility and imagination ruled in freedom.

Therefore the strain of Romanticism, and the anxiety born of its excesses, are felt even by those who have not experienced its feverish glow. The psychological reaction which is now beginning finds a response, more or less dimly, in most minds, and may be likened in the extent of its influence to a national movement.

This reversion in the rhythmic life of the mind observes the law of alternate sequences. After the rule of emotions, dreams and the tumults of the soul, there comes a time when the need of an order born of reason begins to manifest itself. The keynote of the new era, therefore, will be a pronounced call for rationality in all things. The literary phase which is now about to begin will, in its essential character, be allied to that against which Romanticism had previously rebelled; it will be Neo-Classical in its principle; once again the desire for truth will take first place among the motives of creation; realism as one of the means of expression will be given greater latitude, and the claims of a careful style will be more often emphasized.

The moral pulse beats in agreement with the circumstances of the time. During the Victorian era, art forms part of a coherent social whole. Simultaneously and from every direction comes the call for order and discipline. The Reform Act sets at rest the political disturbances by satisfying the impatient demands of the middle classes, and seems to inaugurate an age of stability. After the crisis which followed the struggle against the French Revolution and Napoleon, England sets about organizing herself with a view to internal prosperity and progress. At peace with Europe, she wishes to be at peace with herself. Rules of conduct and religious beliefs have been shaken in the storm; Romanticism has championed the claims of passion, and upheld the rights of the individual; the laxity in morals as witnessed during the regency of George IV. has equalled that of the most unbridled periods of the eighteenth century. With the advent to power of a middle class largely imbued with the spirit of Puritanism, and the accession of a queen to the throne, English society reassumes a larger measure of self-control. Henceforth an accepted standard of stricter morality—sincere or merely conventional—is imposed by common consent; and with Carlyle lies the task of voicing the principles which preside over this national return to a sterner notion of duty.

The practical energy brought into play in the conquest of matter also obeys certain laws; here, again, it is a case of disciplined effort. New discoveries are daily added to the inventions which have given rise to modern machinery; the application of steam in sea and land transport, the improvements in tools, the mobility of capital, the tremendous strides in production and trade which are making Great Britain, during the middle years of the century, the wealthiest of the powers and the very type of an industrial and commercial nation, all confirm and still further intensify one central impulse: the English mind is thus led to reasoned-out habits, positive attention, and cautious methods in action and in thought. And so the basic principle of a teeming economic activity favours in literature the return to precision in form, to beauty within the limits of reason, and to values which have received the stamp of universal approval.

This close connection between material expansion on the one hand, and a phase of realism and order on the other, finds definite expression in a privileged sphere of activity, which is, as it were, a common centre whence radiates at once the power of mind over matter, and the mental energy whereby mind can control itself. Since the sixteenth century, science has been a growing, rival force beside religion and the arts; during the eighteenth, it ceased to be the privilege of an élite, and awakened an interest in the mind of every cultured person; about the middle of the nineteenth century, it comes to hold a place of primal importance among the intellectual preoccupation of the average man. It proves its worth by the control it exercises over the physical universe, and also by the idea of unity which it offers or promises to the innumerable seekers in the many branches of knowledge. It gives power, and also the satisfaction of logical thinking; it holds supreme sway during this new age. It helps the progress of production, and is benefited by it in return. It accentuates the positive character of the century; but it is as much an effect as a cause, and owes its success in no small way to the fostering influence of positive ideas, during this phase when reason is paramount. The goal it sets itself is the search after truth; its formulæ are linked together in a carefully balanced system. And so science provides the very type of a mentality that is essentially counter-Romantic, at the same time as it precisely defines the psychological tone of the period.

From 1830 onwards, the parallel and simultaneous development of all the sciences of mind and matter proceeds with the rapid, imperious, irresistible trend of great historical changes. A vast combination of forces is felt to be at play; and such a combination as will, of necessity, transform life, modify the condition of man, and definitively establish his place in nature. From the very beginning there is evidence of the ambitious quest for an all-embracing synthesis, a supreme theory, a central point towards which the highest attainable results in each science would increasingly tend to converge. And when Spencer, continuing the biological hypotheses of Darwin, organizes knowledge in its entirety into a philosophy of evolution, the whole scientific movement seems to reach its inevitable conclusion.

English literature, therefore, in the years which follow 1830, will be deeply moulded by the authority of a reason which has grown more exacting and active, and which finds its direct and main outlet in science. But it must not be understood that this character alone defines the literature of the period. Far from it. The prestige of knowledge, as of its ally industrialism, may seem more and more to be taking hold upon society; but social life is still very far from becoming a willing victim to the severe dictates of the scholars of Reason. In fact, the Victorian age does not bring science, in the full sense of the word, into the actual life of every day, and cannot, because the great majority of the nation are not interested in anything beyond empiricism, whether of the lowest or the most refined kind. Compromise stamps this type of civilization; and monetary gain rather than the love of truth is the magnetic force which spurs on its activity. It bears within itself the hope of progress through self-controlling thought; but with the masses this hope is only perceived, or understood, as a desire for enjoyment or money-making, which, in order to be satisfied, turns to the popularized elements of knowledge.

And what is of greater importance, the psychological tone of the period is by no means pure; in fact, it is less so now than ever before. Till the fated days when an ancient literature reaches its dying phase, the principle of the preservation of the past in the present acquires a broader and ever broader influence, a more and more powerful sway. And this principle is truer as the moral organism of a people approaches maturity, as the nation in the fullness of its development becomes conscious of its identity, and begins to appreciate the value of its past. Now the Victorian age would seem to correspond to the decisive, perfected ripeness of the original English genius; to the phase when this originality, in full possession of itself, and having more than once gone through the whole cycle of its rhythmic course, has through experience realized all its powers, and gathers in its depths the cherished possession of them all. During the middle and in the final years of the nineteenth century the English mind knows deeper and fuller vibrations than at any other moment in the history of its growth; one feels in it at once the refreshed and still living remembrance of its Elizabethan youth, the lucid self-mastery which it owes to the long schooling of Classicism, and the renewed vigour of the Romantic revival. All these influences and these memories combine in the thought and the art of a literary age which, when the ephemeral injustice of reaction has spent itself, will probably come to be looked upon as the most powerful and the greatest among all the periods of English culture.

On the other hand, while the quality of the national soul becomes richer and more diversified, its quantity, if one may so say, tends to increase accordingly. The Victorian age is the first in which the lower middle classes, and the greater part of the general public, have really had access to culture. With the realization of democratic ideas, education is now more widely distributed. Cheap editions find an unlimited public for the works of the best among past and present writers, and the reviews serve in the most useful way for the diffusion of literature. A feature of this age is the fortune of the serial novel, while another is the creation of the modern newspaper, at once the organ of information and of popular education. The mass of the nation, even to the lowest of its classes, is being born to the life of the mind. Never before have writers of comparatively humble birth been so relatively, or so absolutely, numerous. The effect of this increase is felt not only in the number of the unities, or cells, which go to compose the moral organism of the nation, but also in the many-sided nature of the elements thus grouped together in a composite whole. For the classes which gain access to culture represent, as it were, in the history of national thought, a continual rejuvenation; to a certain extent, although somewhat obscurely, they have shared in the progress of society, but their faculties are more alive and more intact; they contribute to strengthen the elemental forces of the national life, and tend to bring literature back to its origin. With this evocation of the past it is, one may say, largely the past itself, in its newest and most living form, which thus becomes incorporated in the present. And not only have we thus an ever-increasing proportion of minds who bring with them the gift of an almost fresh sensibility to literature; but also, in accordance with a very simple law of experience, as the social foundation of the literary art is being broadened, we witness at the same time an increase in the number and diversity of the dissentient temperaments—those which, whether erratic, belated or prophetic, are pitched in another key than that of their epoch.

Lastly, in so far as Romanticism had expressed a restless state of the deeper life of the soul, and in so far as its decline answered the establishment of Victorian balance, this decline could be neither complete nor sudden, because the unrest in the social world did not disappear with the advent of an order which aimed at greater stability, and, in fact, achieved it. Scarcely have political disturbances been allayed, when there is a fresh and serious outbreak in the economic world; the Victorian period, quiet as it is, throbs with the feverish tremors of anxiety and trouble; this agitation, never quite appeased, can momentarily subside, or break out again so strongly that the whole order of the nation is threatened with an upheaval. From 1840 to 1850 in particular, England seems to be on the verge of a revolution; the novel with a purpose, and a whole series of kindred publications, reflect this disturbed spirit, which is not without an influence on the whole of literature; and a special form of Romanticism, fed by the emotional unrest in the social sphere, derives a renewed vitality from these sources.

To the combined effect of all these causes is due the survival and prolongation of Romanticism, which can be likened, not so much to the twilight glimmer of a closing day, as to a warm glow of sustained light whose radiance is felt to spread in every direction. The spirit of Romanticism continues to influence the innermost consciousness of the age which sees a Tennyson, a Thackeray, a Browning and an Arnold; it permeates almost every thought, just as it colours almost every mode of expression. Even its adversaries, and those who would escape its spell, are impregnated with it. To combat its spell, use is made of the very arms which it itself employs; Carlyle, in denouncing it, does so in a style which is intense, charged with emotional fire and visionary colouring. So deep is the penetrating power of this secret inoculation, that English literature after 1850 does not ring, when tested, with a sound very different from that of the years preceding 1830. New vibrations have been added to the main chord; the tone has been changed; the value of the suggestion is no longer the same; but there is scarcely any alteration in one essential component factor, and this is the element which may be termed "romantic." It continues to reveal itself with such persistence that when, at the most recent turning-point in literary history—the years from 1875 to 1880, and the beginning of contemporary literature—we find the Romantic inspiration again in the ascendant, the new literary transition is much less clearly marked than in the majority of previous cases. In one sense, and despite the superficial variations in taste, England, like Europe, is not as yet entirely free from the predominant influence of Romanticism; she is still witnessing the development of its effects, whether direct or indirect. For it is no easy matter to remedy such a disease, which intensifies the powers of the soul, and imparts a morbid taste even to the desire for recovery; it is not easy to cure that accentuated form of an ancient sensibility, which has come to be an integral part of the permanent fund of human experience.

And not only does Romanticism continue to live, but the old trunk retains enough vigour to send forth young and promising shoots. The very exercise of reason and the pursuit of scientific studies, together with all the psychological causes which are about to promote a second Classicism, stir up a desire for compensation, and awaken an instinctive longing for moral balance. A victorious re-assertion of imagination and the heart thus can be said to proceed directly from the triumph of positivism and industrialism. The age that sees the new doctrines of rationality in operation is also to witness the birth of a new idealism, which will essay to cope with the perils of a morally impoverished life, without waiting for the inevitable reaction that the future holds in store.

Eighteenth-century England had believed that the struggle waged between religion on the one hand, and independent thought on the other, had been concluded to the advantage of the former; to all appearances deism had been vanquished. But now its more dangerous heir, the philosophy of the Utilitarians, is invading more aggressively the whole field of morality and belief. At the same time, from the sphere of industry, where everything is based on fact, there emanates a mood of indifference towards anything that relates to the supernatural. Lastly, the science of nature, and that of human origins, now bring unexpected assistance to the spirit of free intellectual inquiry. The moral effect of modern geological hypotheses, and of German exegesis, is felt in England long before Darwinism has come forth; and from 1830 to 1875 repeated shocks are shaking the fabric of traditional beliefs.

The consciousness of the average man is dimly aware of the conflict in progress, and intuitively comes to recognize that there is a danger threatening the fundamental reasons to live. The echo of this alarm is heard through the whole of Victorian literature. And as the historian and the naturalist appear to be the enemies of biblical teaching, all the representatives of the growing civilization of the day—economists, masters of industry, business men—are deemed the artisans of a hopeless and a joyless materialism. The breaking up of beliefs, the loss of cherished illusions, the end of all nobility and beauty, such are the various aspects of one and the same disaster, the fear of which is diversely obsessing the minds of those to whom feeling and imagination are essentials of life itself. They are sufficiently numerous, and their spiritual energy is active enough, to create powerful counter-movements in the religious, social and æsthetic worlds, against the withering atmosphere of the order that is forcing itself upon them. This crisis in the life of many souls is intimately allied with the uneasy feeling, roused by the unchecked development of an individualistic society. The destructive action of science, and of a material revolution, thus produces its inevitable effects as early as the middle years of the century; this rationalist age is all shaken by the echoing sounds of one impassioned protestation after another. Newman, Carlyle and Ruskin, in conflict with the spirit of their time, introduce all the themes which fifty years later a new mysticism, then triumphant, will take up in the glad feeling of its own harmony with a deep stirring of thought, and with the turn of events themselves. The intellectual generation of Herbert Spencer, in its very nature, evinces this contradiction, and reveals this blending of elements.

It would be better, therefore, to define the tendencies of this age as the outcome of an essential duality of character, made up of so many elements that it would be impossible to bring them under one principle. But no matter how different may be the precise quality of each, they still can be grouped round one common impulse, the most elementary of all: the search for stability, for balance; the desire to obey the laws of life and the governing principles of success. England during the Victorian era is no less efficiently, but more consciously and reflectively than in the past, a supple organism, which spontaneously adapts itself to circumstances, and which wishing for the necessary compensation, intuitively knows where to find it. Indeed, the distinguishing feature of this age is to be found in its broader, more studied grasp of the conditions connected with its own stability.

The motive at the heart of the scientific, practical and rationalist movement, is a striving after balance by way of the intelligence; it is an effort to view, to comprehend, and to organize life and society, according to the inferences which mind draws from nature. The utilitarian character of the main philosophical current of these years shows clearly that it is immediately concerned with the betterment of both body and soul. As the science of mankind and of human society seems then to reach easily grasped conclusions, its adepts believe in the fulfilment of its object, and the predominance of its spirit accounts for the widespread optimism of the period. In its view, a balance has already been realized, or is in process of realization, through the spontaneous play of cosmic forces; an irresistible impulsion towards progress is at work. Through a cheap application of this method and of these conclusions, the general public find a superficial self-satisfaction in the mediocre compromise to which they cling.

It is also a desire for balance which lies at the root of the interventionist movement, and of the revival of idealism; but here the more stable order wished for is one that can be realized only if founded upon sound psychological principles, and a fair proportioning of moral tendencies. As a compensatory and corrective reaction, this attempt to strengthen the social solidarity of the people, and to allow the affective powers of the soul their normal freedom, is accompanied by a keen sense of the evil which it must fight; and thus it introduces a strong wave of pessimism into the self-satisfied mood of the Victorian era.

These movements, opposed as they are, and despite the momentary excesses to which each may go, only counteract each other, and indeed offer no resistance to such counter-action, so long as it is necessary for the safety and prosperity of the whole. It will be seen, therefore, that the search for balance is at once the most general and the most typical feature of this age, and one which permits its very varied aspects to be grouped together. And as this quest for equilibrium is rather like an orderly arrangement, a converging of means towards an end; as, moreover, in its new and accentuated form, it tends rather to be intellectual, or related to an instinct grown intellectual and conscious, it will be recognized that the rational elements of thought—the Neo-Classical elements in art—are indeed the most normal and central of the period; they it is that give it its distinctive character.

To be consulted: Benn, *Modern England,* 1908; McCarthy, *Short History of Our Own Times,* new ed., 1907; Cazamian, *Modern England,* 1911; Chesterton, *The Victorian Age in Literature,* 1913; Chevrillon, *La Pensée de Ruskin,* 1909; Duncan, *Life and Letters of H. Spencer,* 1908; Elton, *Survey of English Literature, 1830–80,* 1920; Halévy, *Histoire du peuple anglais au xix*^{e} *siècle,* vol. iii., 1923; Low and Sanders, *Political History of England,* vol. xii., 1907; *Social England,* ed. by H. D. Traill, vol. vi. (1815–85), 1898; Walker, *The Literature of the Victorian Era.* 1910.

CHAPTER II

INTELLECTUALISM AND SCIENCE

1. The Diffusion of the Utilitarian Doctrine.—From 1830 onwards, the doctrine of utility exercises a much wider influence than heretofore on public opinion, politics and the national life of the people. Not so much through the denser expressions which it had received from its genuine masters, as through the looser form which their disciples are now imparting to it, this doctrine sways the majority of minds, consciously or unconsciously. Despite the fact that it is still viewed with suspicion by the upholders of the established modes of ethical teaching, it nevertheless constitutes, during the middle years of the century, the effective philosophy of Victorian society. It provides, as it were, a central framework for the relatively regular edifice of ideas which science is tentatively erecting, and where human life will henceforth try to find a shelter.

This success of what is, after all, a kind of generalized rationalism, is the more pronounced as the moral tone of the period is in natural harmony with it. The decline of Romanticism, the establishment of a more stable order, the developing of a positive civilization which sees the triumph of business instincts, interested motives and wealth—all lend themselves easily to bring about the success of a system based on abstract thought, but aiming at reality, and permeated by practical considerations. Thus it is that utilitarianism, growing more and more from the unceasing progress of the various sciences, seems to answer the needs of far the greater number of men; its critics and adversaries are exceptions.

As often happens, it is among these exceptional minds, reacting against the most normal attitude of their time, that the proportion of original personalities and creative artists is greatest. On the contrary, the now easier diffusion of utilitarian principles is accompanied by an inner weakening of its fecundity as a theme. The writers who are its docile advocates can scarcely be said to bring any longer to its service any personality in temperament; as far as literature is concerned, their work is negligible.

Therefore it is not among the orthodox philosophical radicals, or the pure economists, that one must look for the most interesting figures in this vast movement; but rather among the thinkers and writers who preserve an individual attitude towards the doctrine; because being more or less free from any explicit adhesion to it, they have diverted its intellectual influence towards concrete problems, or distant branches of knowledge, such as history, theology, criticism.[1]

After the middle of the century, there appears a new and more powerful expression of the desire to understand what exists, and reduce it to some sort of unity; a process extended in the case of Darwin to the whole scale of living beings, and with Spencer, to the entire cosmos. The doctrine of evolution is an intellectual ferment, active and violent enough in itself to inspire in its first apostles something of the creative ardour without which there is no real note of personality in literature; so, while they owe their place in the history of English thought mainly to the energy they bring to their scientific effort, the work which this effort has produced is not devoid of human value.

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[1] The active supporters of Utilitarianism in politics, when once the reform of Electoral Rights had been effected, turned their attention to the cause of Free Trade. Richard Cobden (1804–65) and John Bright (1811–89) devoted themselves to the service of this cause and contributed in bringing about its triumph, the first by his sober and persuasive eloquence, the second by the more ardent, more moving tone of his oratory, charged, as it was, with a very high moral persuasiveness. Cobden, *Speeches*, 1870; see *Life* by Morley, 1881. Bright, *Speeches*, 1878; see *Life* by Trevelyan, 1913.

2. Philosophy: John Stuart Mill.—John Stuart Mill[1] is connected with the intellectualism of the Utilitarians by immediate descent, and by direct moral discipleship. He is the product of an education which was entirely controlled by this doctrine; and he remains its most illustrious representative. But his life and work bear the stamp of a dual character; and even with him, in this stronghold of rational thought, do we find that the influences of psychological Romanticism, which by this time have become part and parcel of all minds, are deeply felt.

He was never disloyal to the duty of seeking truth by means of reason. It was out of intellectual sincerity that he came to accept, by the side of intelligence, other instruments of knowledge and action. He broadened the system of ideas, either too narrow or too poor, which he had received from a school of thought to which he never ceased to belong. In imbuing rationalism with feeling and flexibility, he believed that he was not destroying it, but rather completing it. Whatever one may think the theoretical success of this synthesis to have been, it would be unfair not to recognize the stability and the beauty of a character founded upon it.

Mill developed at first along straight lines, the willing follower of Bentham and of his father. Then came a crisis of conscience, of which he has left us a clear account. His nature, which had been artificially withered, thenceforth expanded in the fullness of its powers; and with the reality of feelings, there was borne in upon him the existence of new mental shades. Thus was fertilized the germ of an inner progress, which had a decisive effect in modifying his thought. He read Wordsworth, became receptive to poetic suggestion, acknowledged the claims of the heart, and discovered in everything around him a concrete and unsuspected wealth. The superior merit of his philosophy is to be found in this much finer adaptation to an experience more objectively registered. He was the first in England to perceive the essential conflict of the tendencies between which his age was divided; and he set up an antithesis, which the course of time has confirmed, between Bentham and Coleridge; between systematic intellectualism on the one hand, inherited from the eighteenth century, and on the other the mysticism of intuition, which had been revived during the Romantic era.

Mill's work is great, and has not ceased to prove its fecundity. The fruit of a nobly scrupulous thought, and of a meditative humanity of heart, it looked forward boldly enough to keep abreast of the future. It owes its worth to the cogency of its reasoning, but no less to its courage in facing difficult problems; to the sharpness of analysis, but no less to the realism of imagination.

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[1] John Stuart Mill, son of James Mill (see above, Book V. chap. iii.), born in London in 1806, educated very systematically by his father, showed extraordinary precocity. Attached to the central service of the East India Company (1823–58), he led, at first, a life wholly engrossed in study, against which, however, the needs of his sensibility reacted more and more, from 1836 onward. He wrote for radical papers, and, above all, for the *Westminster Review*, many articles, a number of which were collected at a later date (*Dissertations and Discussions*, 4 vols., 1859–75). He published *A System of Logic*, etc. (1843); *Principles of Political Economy* (1848). In 1851 he married Mrs. Taylor, who brought a deep influence to bear upon his thought; she died in 1858 at Avignon, and it was here, beside her last resting-place, that Mill spent his remaining years, save from 1865 to 1868, when he was a Member of Parliament. His other publications include: *On Liberty* (1859), *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861), *Utilitarianism* (1863), *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy* (1865), *Auguste Comte and Positivism* (1865), *On the Subjection of Women* (1869); he died in 1873, leaving an *Autobiography* (1873) and *Three Essays on Religion* (1874). *Correspondance avec d'Eichthal*, 1898; *Lettres à Auguste Comte*, ed. by Lévy-Bruhl, 1899; *Letters*, ed. by Elliot, 1910. See Bain, *J. S. Mill*, 1882; Douglas, *J. S. Mill*, 1895; Sir L. Stephen, *The English Utilitarians*, vol. iii., 1900; Taine, *Le Positivisme anglais, étude sur Stuart Mill*, 1864, incorporated in his *Littérature anglaise*, vol. v.

As a logician, he invests a purely empirical theory of induction with the rigour of precise formulæ; he unravels in a convincing manner the tangled paths which experience follows in order to draw ever-justified conclusions from the mere habits of things. It is upon facts, and facts alone, that science and the coherence of the universe are based; but the certitude thus evolved, fragile as it is when compared with our craving for the absolute, is illuminated with such vivid psychological light, and so strongly traced back to the actual processes of the mind, that a conviction grows irresistibly upon us: in no other manner has man put together, piecemeal and by much toil, the humble tutelary edifice which can satisfy his need for an order of things outside himself. Similarly, the metaphysician in Mill reconciles the imperious authority of that fact, the world of the senses, with the scepticism of abstract reflection, in a formula where the tradition of Berkeley commingles with all the positive instinct of British genius; namely, that matter is a "permanent possibility of sensations." Mind remains, as empiricism would have it, a more or less closely woven network of ideas and images, assembled by the laws of mental association; but if Mill severely criticizes the intuitive theory of Hamilton, he is not far from admitting that personality and memory imply the existence of a more organic relationship between the various elements of the "ego."

As a moralist, Mill further develops the doctrine of utility, and does not believe that he violates its principle by seeking to infuse it with a finer meaning. Through a more exact exercise of the faculty of introspection, he links up more closely the ethical thesis of Bentham with all the immemorial experiences which all religions have consecrated. What is happiness, he contends, but something which evaporates when sought after directly? The very constitution of the soul makes happiness dependent upon a mode of life occupied with other things. And in the range of pleasures there exist irreducible differences of quality; such pleasures, for example, as emanate from altruistic motives and from the highest human endeavours have a virtue that cannot be matched among those of the senses. Mill in thus correcting what he understands to be a too elementary form of empiricism, does not as yet claim anything save experience; but in this experience was perhaps implied a direct denial of the simple rule of intelligent egoism.

It is, however, to the science of social life that he has devoted the best of his thought, so generous and yet ever in touch with facts. Utilitarian radicalism had, it seemed, definitively established the foundations of democratic liberty. But the liberty of the individual is by no means a clear or a self-sufficient principle; it must be defined, and must be combined in an organic whole with the limits imposed by social life. The law of majorities is not a perfect expression of justice in a democratic state; more supple modes will have to be found in order to represent all shades of opinion. Every fully conscious being has a right to share in the government of all by all; and women, unjustly excluded, must be admitted into the pale of electoral privileges. Political economy should be no longer the impassible theory of the natural link which binds up the maximum of production with the greatest independence of the productive agents; it should purpose as well to study, and to improve, the distribution of wealth; and if in this domain the intervention of the State, as the organ of collective interests, were necessary, then the uncompromisingness of a doctrine should finally yield before the more sacred demands of life.

This austere soul thus had in it something of the sweetness of charity. Mill's highly intellectual figure is endued with the warm glow of a moral radiation to be felt even in his work. His clear and simple prose grows animated but rarely; still, the honesty of mind and the sincerity of heart which are revealed in it imbue it with a sober charm.

3. History: Macaulay, Buckle, Lecky, etc.—After Romanticism has quickened men's interest in national origins and revived the cult of the Past, the modern idea of history, of which Hume in the eighteenth century had already given a very able sketch, begins to evolve under an influence, in this case complementary and not antagonistic: that of an age when science deliberately undertakes the complete study of the facts relating to man. Utilitarian rationalism counts for much in the formation of an atmosphere that is favourable to the examination of the causes which may account for the development of peoples; as a doctrine, it is permeated by the spirit of determinism; the idea that the sphere of individual actions is not outside the control of general laws, but is subject to certain exterior necessities, lies at the root of a diffused philosophy, a kind of more or less conscious positivism, which, henceforth, governs the methods of historians. At the same time, the traces left by a writer like Scott on the imagination of all those whose effort it is to resuscitate lost ages, together with the stimulus which Romanticism brought to the feeling of national continuity, are too strong, too important to be forgotten. But if one had to classify history after 1830, it would be to place it among the branches of knowledge in which the guiding spirit is a desire for rational truth.[1]

Already before 1830 Hallam[2] had written works of power and concentration, where the desire for intellectual honesty took a first place in the writer's inspiration, allying itself to a very stern sense of moral justice. His study of the English Constitution was destined to remain for many years the standard work on a subject of special interest. In it a reticent British pride can hardly be distinguished from a sort of juridical religion, the worship of liberty in order, which, if it does not produce an impassioned narrative, at least lends it a soul. Between the royal prerogative, of foreign origin, on the one hand, and on the other the need for independence, rooted in the oldest traditions of the race, there was waged a long conflict, the stages of which Hallam narrates in a sensible style, not exempt from some elaborate polish.

Macaulay[3] is not a philosopher, nor has he anything about him of the Radical. Judged by his opinions he is a Whig, sharing the average feelings of his compatriots and, in fact, tending to side with the conservative majority. But his liberalism is not purely instinctive; there is a lucidity about it which savours of system. In the growth of Macaulay's thought one can trace the very definite influence of utilitarian philosophy, and of the powerful magnetism which it did not fail to exercise in his generation. He owes it a taste for intellectuality, the habit and need of it, and to some degree a pride in it; as well as the sense of modernity, of progress, and the craving for logic. Combined with the natural gifts of a well-balanced temperament and of a clear intelligence, that influence endowed him with a faculty of construction, which links him up in a remarkable way with writers of the French type.

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[1] From now onwards, the methods of the German historians began to exercise an influence in England; the *History of Rome*, by Niebuhr, was translated in 1828–32.

[2] Henry Hallam (1777–1859): *A View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages*, 1818; *The Constitutional History of England*, etc., 1827; *Introduction to the Literature of Europe in the XVth, XVIth and XVIIth Centuries*, 1837–39. See Mignet, *Eloges historiques*, 1864.

[3] Thomas Babington Macaulay, born in 1800 near London, came of middle-class family, studied at Cambridge, practised at the Bar, was an active contributor to the *Edinburgh Review;* elected to Parliament in 1830, he was entrusted with a magistracy in India (1834–38), where he was engaged in drawing up a penal code. Returning to England, he published in 1842 his collection of verse, *Lays of Ancient Rome;* was again, on two occasions, Member of Parliament, occupied the post of Secretary of State; raised to the peerage in 1857, he died in 1859. His *Critical and Historical Essays* were collected in 3 vols., 1843. *The History of England from the Accession of James II.*, incomplete, appeared in 5 vols., from 1849 to 1861. His *Speeches* were published in 1854. *Works*, ed. by Trevelyan, 1866. See the biography by Trevelyan, 1876; studies by Morison (English Men of Letters), 1882; Jebb, 1900; L. Stephen, *Hours in a Library*, 3rd series, 1879; Taine, *Littérature anglaise*, vol. v.

He has a deeper and more fundamental notion of order than of truth. To him truth is before all to be found in order; and so with him the man of letters and the artist are superior to the historian. His main concern is by no means the anxious search after the exact shade, nor is it a scrupulous reverence of facts, nor even the care of documentation; but after his mind has gathered a general impression, and formed a thesis, through an inner process of elaboration more intuitive than it is precise, then does he concentrate all the vigour of his talent to uphold this cause. And behind the advocate there is a man, with strongly preconceived and unalterable ideas, which he obeys without any real struggle. He believes that the first duty of history is to teach; therefore he teaches; and his general doctrine espouses with astonishing fidelity the contours of the moral and political faith which would be that of an eminent contributor to the *Edinburgh Review.*

This intrusion of the writer's personality in his work is to a certain extent inevitable; and only at the expense of a very grievous sacrifice does the objective science of the past, as it is conceived to-day, free itself from it in practice, or give itself an illusion that it does. His happy unconsciousness lends Macaulay scope for animation, oratorical delights, and a warmth of dramatic narration. If he is no longer considered by the professional historians as an unexceptionable member of the craft, he still remains a great writer. No one has known better how to arrange great historical canvases, or manage the narration of an episode; and his tremendous popularity went to prove the hold his art had upon the general public.

Too much should not be made of Macaulay's recognition and profession of the likeness between his own art and that of the novelist; his imagination, if it is not completely dominated by the search for pure truth, at least serves it with great success and in original ways. In the sifting of documents or in the citation of sources he does not show the meticulous accuracy of modern technique; but, on the other hand, his mind is awake to the value of concrete testimony, and he has the intuitive sense of it; he shows a familiarity with the atmosphere, the intimate life, the picturesque setting of an epoch, that is greater and more solid, just as the picture in which he traces it all is more detailed and instructive, than has ever been the case before him. He knows how to revive customs, and surround events and people with the influences which help us to understand them; and he can also penetrate character, and interpret it as a master of historical psychology, so long as the limits of his nature do not narrow his sympathy. To sum up, he has moulded together in a synthesis, incomplete certainly but already rich, along with the ancient ideal of moving and didactic history, the evocative manner of a Scott, and that more positive notion of social causes which forms, after the contribution of Romanticism, the new progress of the science of the Past.

His errors and his weak points have been emphasized with a severity often excessive. Looked upon as the artistic reconstruction of an age—the transition from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century in England—his *History* retains a permanent value. But his *Essays,* where the severe attention to method is less indispensable, and where he enjoys more fully the sense of a free scope, possess equal qualities, and do not lay themselves open to the same criticism. The trend of thought throughout their pages is very similar to that of the *History;* very often in their choice of subject, and almost always in their style, they play the dual part of literary exercises and historical studies. Literature here is interwoven with life, and the individual reinstated in his epoch. The substance of the *Essays* is thinner, and in certain cases has been found to be inconsistent; they have their defects of injustice or superficiality; but in compensation, when the theme suits the temperament of the author, then their merits are striking; and even when the reader's satisfaction is not unmixed, yet he derives a very great pleasure from their pages. They glow with a brilliance that is the outcome of the sincere interest taken by a cultivated, generalizing and eloquent mind in the pageant of human life; their merit is also due to the skill which can throw into relief the characteristics and contrasts of facts and of souls; finally, and above all, they owe most to the style, fluent, clear, and yet enhanced by individual touches, skilful antitheses and sparkling epigrams; at one time periodical, at another condensed into short and pithy sentences; clever enough to display flexibility and variety, yet lacking the absolute simplicity and naturalness which could relieve it from a suspicion of artifice, grandiloquence, or occasional lapses in good taste.

Macaulay has paid very dearly for his too perfect harmony with an age which acclaimed his talent, but never stressed its relativity. As was said even during Victorian times, he has too much assurance, is too infallibly dogmatic in his ways of thinking and feeling, and further, is not self-critical enough. His bourgeois intellectualism showed the narrowness of its outlook, as soon as a revolt began against the philistine satisfaction of a progress which was unconscious of its mediocrity. His merits, however, have stood the test of this inevitable reaction; and his name is still associated with an attractive and, at the same time, reliable interpretation of certain aspects of the nation's history.

The unfinished but very significant work of Buckle[1] establishes the closest and the most direct contact between history and philosophic rationalism. While he accepts and, indeed, goes beyond the point of view of the English Utilitarians, Buckle adopts the more ample determinism of the French Positivists; he holds that just as individual actions, so the destiny of peoples and the growth of civilizations come under the wide scope of natural casuality, the laws of which can be discovered. This quest is properly the task of the historian. By combining the doctrine of Comte with the teaching of Montesquieu, Buckle finds the influences of the physical surroundings and of the climate at the very core of the succession of historical periods. But Nature is by no means the sole agent of formation in the life of mankind; through its stimuli it gives birth to intelligence, and this, more than moral conscience, is the active force which, in turn, modifies reality, and with the progress of science increases the power of man over the universe. The ambition and, in some measure, the method of sociological history are thus defined, and applied to examples—certain aspects of France and Scotland—as the preface to a more complete study of modern English civilisation. The boldness of this tentative effort to explain, by material conditions, the spiritual originality of a people, but also to seek in its ideas the mainspring of its social life, and, again, the great success this effort met with, go to show in what direction the deep movement of thought is progressing, even before the appearance of the evolution theory. The ambition of Buckle bears some analogy to that of Taine.

As is frequently the case in England, Buckle was the disciple of no master, but formed his views through the instincts of a strong intelligence. He worked upon material brought together by a personal faculty of assimilation. His erudition has not the thoroughness needed for such an enterprise. His clear style, animated by a warm demonstrative zeal, lacks attention to detail; there is nothing artistic about it. But the value of the work lies in the energy of the main conception, in the philosophic divination therein displayed, and in the imaginative grasp of the relationships between the most diverse elements of concrete reality, or of the world of science.

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[1] Henry Thomas Buckle, born in Kent in 1821, of middle-class family, was educated privately; possessing independent means, he travelled, was influenced by liberal ideas and by Comte; prepared himself by deep study for his great work, *History of Civilisation in England*, 1857–61, which his premature death in 1862 left unfinished. See J. M. Robertson, *Buckle and His Critics*, 1859.

It is less easy to assign a place to Froude[1] among the thinkers of his time, grouped as they are round two distinct intellectual poles. On the one hand he is strongly influenced by rationalism; he gives up the traditional forms of faith, and with his breaking away from the Church comes a deep-felt crisis in his life. But, on the other hand, is he not the disciple of Carlyle, after having been for a brief spell that of Newman? His moral nature has a vein of ardour and passion; whatever cause he takes up is invested with the accent of personality; the growing religion of the Empire stirs and exalts him. A whole part of his nature is critical and clear-sighted, whilst another is imaginative and emotive. A divided soul, he knew no rest. He gave himself up to the cold discipline of historical research, but used it as the instrument for his prejudices; as the biographer of his master Carlyle, he made the idol the object of a ruthless search for cruel truths; and behind this search, there is the faint suspicion that the writer is secretly striving after dramatic effect.

Judged from his work as a whole, he was mistaken when he fancied he devoted himself to the severe methodical pursuits of thought. There is no sure precision, either in his practice, or yet in the desire behind it; he is not ready for the mutilation of self which precision demands. As the historian of England or as a biographer, he has relied upon intuition for his essential certitudes. Many others have done the same, and, no doubt, the greatest historians among them. He has exercised control over his intuitions, and thrown light upon them as best possible; he was aware of the value of documents and archives, and was not averse to utilizing them; he went to them for support and confirmation, for the substance of a story whose real object is still to throw the significance of things into greater relief. This, therefore, is not his weak point. But his preferences are strong, and he makes no attempt to conceal them; they bear upon vital points in political or religious history; what he reveals of Carlyle's private life is painful; as if he were predestined for the part of polemist, he always rubs up against some susceptibilities, and creates an atmosphere of controversy; so that, himself showing no indulgence, he was, in turn, treated unsparingly; not only has his inability to perceive facts in an objective way been fully exposed, but also his incapability to quote documents correctly.

This inexactitude comes as a revelation. In spite of his conscious effort, the outcome of honest intention, Froude is attracted and swayed more by the character and possible intensity of things, than by the abstract mystery of their vanished truth. The lapses in his material attention can be traced to no other cause. As these lapses scarcely concern anything beyond the mere automatic part of his inner activity, they leave untouched, in all that is voluntary, the value of his ingenious and striking constructions, in which the past is organized according to the law of a strong personality. The work of Froude retains its vital interest; it is saved from oblivion by the inquiring nature of the curious mind behind it, as well as by the boldness of a venturesome but penetrating judgment; it is still alive with the stir of our contemporary problems, which Froude often transposed, as it were, into another age. It has variety, and touches upon many subjects, with a fertility of thought that is occasionally diffuse; its style, easy, animated and picturesque, has gained for it many readers. The philosophy which it teaches is not original; its favourite themes are the ordered arrangement of centuries round the figures of great men, the fecundity of heroic energy during the great crises of mankind, the presence of a providential destiny behind momentous issues; it was none other than the doctrine which Carlyle was continually preaching. But Froude develops and illustrates it, in the tone of a more simple, less fiercely strained exposition; he thus has popularized, along with the feeling of history and the taste for it, some of the sentiments which have gone to form the moralizing imperialism of modern England.

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[1] James Anthony Froude, born in 1818 in Devon, the son of an Anglican cleric, studied at Oxford, took orders; but renouncing orthodoxy, he left his preferments and devoted himself to literature. After publishing two anonymous works, *Shadows of the Clouds*, 1847; *The Nemesis of Faith*, 1848, he adopted the philosophy of Carlyle, collaborated in radical reviews (articles collected in 4 vols., *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, 1867–83), edited *Fraser's Magazine* (1860–74), published *A History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada*, 1856–70; *The English in Ireland in the XVIIIth Century*, 1872–74; *Cæsar*, 1879; chosen by Carlyle as his biographer, he completed the task in 4 vols. (1882–84), a work which raised violent controversy. *Oceana* (1886) and *The West Indies* (1888) combined travel impressions with political opinions. Elected to a professorship at Oxford in 1892, he published other various historical works, and died in 1894. See Paul, *Life of Froude*, 1905; Leslie Stephen, *Studies of a Biographer*, vol. iii., 1902.

Considered as historians, Froude and Freeman[1] have more than one trait in common, which the difference of their natures cannot obliterate. With the one, as with the other, the study of the past is wholly enlivened by the obsession of the present. Freeman has still less concentration than his rival, while he lacks the other's gifts of philosophy and irony. He is even more carried away by a more undisguised passion, whether it be political zeal or patriotism. The literary interest of his work is second-rate; and its technical value is more or less questioned, according to the various fortunes of the thesis which is still associated with his name: the Germanic origin of English institutions. This work remains very representative; it is one of the signs, and was one of the means, of the formation of a keener historical consciousness, which points, in Victorian England, to the growth of a surer and more dogmatic self-assertion. The influence of this mood prolongs the action of Romanticism, and tends to support in principle the opposition of British genius to Latin culture.

Lecky,[2] on the contrary, is of the rationalist school of Gibbon and Buckle. He writes history in the light of a central psychological fact, the decisive advent of the notion of cause in individual or collective destiny, the gradual disappearance of a passive or unreflecting adhesion of minds as the instrument of their accord. It is none other than the thesis of eighteenth-century French philosophy that is again taken up, and put forth in a spirit of even greater audacity; and thus, for the Victorian age—or, at least, for what is most characteristic in it—this effort of reason by which the moral sciences, following upon the teaching of Comte and the Utilitarians, are regarded as essentially analogous to the physical sciences, is in a way a return to a kind of intellectual tradition, which had been interrupted for a brief spell by the triumph of Romanticism.

Lecky's mind has been fashioned in the school of this new mental outlook, which calls for a satisfactory linking-up of the various terms of an historical whole, and of all material and spiritual facts—an outlook that is the peculiar attribute of sociological thought. He allows for the activity of ideas, and fits them in with the development of economic and social history. The belief in progress, the optimism of the age of Spencer, form, as it were, the very soul of his work, as lucid in thought as it is calm in outlook. It is not altogether devoid of feeling, as is proved, among other examples, by the sympathetic interest it evinces in Ireland. Despite the abstract nature of its more analytical pages, it retains something of the full flavour of reality. But it has not the close, fine grain of true literature; and its form does not entirely answer the expectations either of the scholar, or of the artist.

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[1] Edward Augustus Freeman, born in 1823, studied at Oxford, where he first lived as an independent man of letters, then lectured on history from 1884 until his death in 1892. His publications were many, and include: *A History of Architecture*, 1849; *The History of Federal Government*, 1865; *The History of the Norman Conquest of England*, 1867–79; *The Historical Geography of Europe*, 1881; *The Reign of William Rufus*, 1882; etc. See Stephens, *Life and Letters of Freeman*, 1895.

[2] William Edward Hartpole Lecky (1838–1903), born in Dublin: *The Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland*, 1861; *History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe*, 1865; *History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne*, 1869; *History of England in the XVIIIth Century*, 1878–90; *Democracy and Liberty*, 1896; *The Map of Life*, 1899. See *Memoir* by his wife, 1909.

The fact is that the new method of history tends to accentuate the conflict between the mental conditions of the search for truth, and those of æsthetic creation. The last years of the nineteenth century are to witness the extinction of the race of historians who are also great writers. For a time, the craving for documentary evidence, the suppression of anything suggestive of personal judgment, the distrust of intuitive imagination, the fear of all utterances too intense to be safe and discriminating, all go to make historical narrative, first and foremost, a work of technique, careless of artistic beauty, and, indeed, prone to exorcize its maleficent spell. In England as elsewhere, history as a science then turns away from the general reader, to whom it had hitherto addressed itself. A cleavage takes place between the scientist, on the one hand, who elaborates knowledge, and does not seek to invest it with a more human interest; and on the other hand the popularizer, who spreads it abroad, and who, in the full consciousness of the inferiority of his task, is more willingly content with mediocrity.

It still happens, however, that the particular quality of a writer's mind will raise the diffusion of knowledge to the status of the literature of personal expression. The permanent success of Green's *History of the English People*[1] is due to the radiating power of an impassioned feeling, which associates the humblest actors in the drama with the destiny of the country. In fact, the sentiment of the universal solidarity on which a nation is built, and what might be called the social type of imagination, are in the present instance new sources of truth; they add original resources to the traditional method of history.

It will also happen that the specialist who is, as it were, the pioneer in his special province of historical study, possesses the necessary vigour to combine his conclusions into a well-ordered synthesis; the *Constitutional History* of Stubbs[2] offers a good example of this; or that the scrupulous honesty of a worker can give to his pages a kind of austere but contagious glow, and that the love for truth, brought to bear on the story of dramatic events, leaves them much of their power to stir the imagination of the reader, as with Gardiner,[3] the historian of the Civil War; or, finally, there is the example of a scholar who, engaged in the study of charters, and most anxious to keep within the limits of documentary precision, still has in himself a fresh spring of vitality, a faculty of sympathetic insight, and manages soberly to combine into one creative impulse the joy of literary sensitiveness and the keen legal intelligence of the past.[4]

4. Liberalism in Religion.—The scientific spirit, widening its hold on the realities of moral life, now reaches the field of religious ideas. It brings with it a menace, or a principle of transformation. From 1830 onwards, the struggle

[1] John Richard Green (1837–83): *A Short History of the English People*, 1874; *History of the English People*, 1878–80; *The Making of England*, 1882; *The Conquest of England*, 1883.

[2] William Stubbs (1825–1901): *The Constitutional History of England in Its Origin and Development*, 1874–78.

[3] Samuel Rawson Gardiner (1829–1902): *A History of England from the Accession of James I. to the Outbreak of the Civil War*, 1883–84; *History of the Great Civil War*, 1886–91; *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate* (unfinished), 1894–1901.

[4] Frederic William Maitland (1850–1906): *History of English Law before the Time of Edward I.* (with Sir F. Pollock), 1893; *Domesday Book and Beyond*, 1897; *Township and Borough*, 1898, etc.

becomes more apparent between science and traditional theology. In this trial, belief sometimes seems to be overcome; the faith of many is shaken; and many have to break away, not without an inner disruption, from the fold of the Church. At the same time, others in greater numbers make the necessary sacrifices to the spirit of free inquiry, and reconcile former assertions with new formulæ. With nearly all, this crisis, the gravest which can assail the conscience of man, stirs up a feeling of deep uneasiness, the direct or distant effects of which are widely reflected in the moral life of the whole age.

Under the pressure of an opinion which is still very homogeneous, scepticism, in the middle years of the Victorian era, is almost always silent; it retires, as it were, from view, or if it shows itself, it is in another guise. When after 1860[1] comes the open profession of absolute free-thinking, it raises a scandal. Already before this date the presence of a fermenting element of pure religious denial in the collective thought of the nation is none the less plainly recognizable. It explains at once the bitter tone of certain fears, and also the strength of certain reactions. Towards the end of the period, philosophical doubt, the self-restraint of the human mind giving up the endeavour to reach the first cause of things, describe themselves by a new name, the subdued aggressiveness of which does not disarm the prejudice of believers.[2]

The liberal movement within the Anglican Church itself has quite another aim in view, even if the results do not always go to show it. It begins as early as the first years of the century, and develops with the progress of science, the revival of rationalism in the form of the utilitarian doctrine, together with the influence of German criticism and exegesis. Coleridge is a free believer; he interprets the Scriptures according to his intuitive sense of their moral fruitfulness, and does not seek after any surer proof of their authority.[3] This mystical mood is rather foreign to the more drily lucid thought of an intellectual group who at Oxford, about 1830, are endeavouring to introduce greater elasticity into the belief in biblical inspiration, and to bring it into the category of relative values. This attempt comes as a shock to the instincts of the average believer, and even to the liberal type of churchman. Those thinkers[4] consider the religious problem as an object of pure science. Their effort results in a reaction; and the "Oxford Movement," or "Catholic Revival," springs from the spirit of opposition which they arouse.

Their immediate disciples, to whom public opinion is more tolerant, organize the critical tendencies with a living body of eager and glowing affirmations. They give doubt an inner impulse not towards negation, but towards faith; a moral faith with a Thomas Arnold and a Robertson, a social one with a Maurice and a Kingsley.[5]

The methods and conclusions of the German exegetists, meanwhile, are exercising a growing influence in England; their principal works are made better known through translations.[6] Shortly after 1850, a whole group of thinkers is formed who proclaim themselves their disciples, or, at least, seek therein the general themes of their inspiration. The influence of science, and that of liberal theology, are combined in the minds of the supporters of this somewhat shifting spirit, whose central aim is to reconcile independence of

[1] See the *Life of Charles Bradlaugh* by his daughter, 1894.

[2] The word "agnostic" was coined by Huxley in 1869. See *An Agnostic's Apology*, by Leslie Stephen, 1892.

[3] See above, Book V. chap. i. sect. 3.

[4] The most noteworthy are Richard Whately and Renn Dickson Hampden.

[5] Thomas Arnold, 1775–1842. Frederick Robertson, 1816–53. Frederick Denison Maurice, 1805–72: *The Kingdom of Christ*, 1837; *The Religions of the World*, 1847. For Kingsley, see later, chap. iii. sect. 3.

[6] Julius Hare and Connop Thirlwall translated Schleiermacher: *A Critical Essay on the Gospel of St. Luke*, 1825. George Eliot translated Strauss (*Life of Jesus*, 1846) and Feuerbach (*Essence of Christianity*, 1854).

thought with belief. The "Broad Church"[1] is essentially tolerant; it accepts or tries to promote the co-operation of different religions and nationalities; it tends to qualify or eliminate dogma, reduces the part of the supernatural to a minimum, or replaces it by the inexplicable phenomena of psychology; it emphasizes what can bring all men of good will together: the feeling of human solidarity and the practice of duty. This attitude, which varies from a philosophical Christianity to a faith purely human, in its more extreme forms rejoins the agnosticism of the sceptics. It contributes to pervade the intellectual atmosphere with an element of doubt; and to spread further an impression that reason is gradually gaining the victory over the irrational demands of the will to believe.[2]

5. **Moral and Literary Criticism: Matthew Arnold.**—More definitely than any English writer before him, Matthew Arnold[3] based his work and his life upon the intellectual principle of criticism. Professional philosophers, such as Hume, had put every idea, and some social facts, to the test of a severe examination. But, as yet, no one had studied from the psychological point of view the very attitude of the national mind, the focus, as it were, from which all the various ways and habits of the British people radiate out; and, discovering the radical weakness in the clear realization of self, had endeavoured by persistent and multiple effort to diffuse self-knowledge, from that centre, over every field of thought and action. This was Arnold's mission, and in it his personality takes on its distinctive character. The poet in him, although intimately associated with the critic, does not work in complete unison with him; he confesses the anguish of a courageous thought; he avows the melancholy which mingles with the clear-sightedness of the modern mind; he reveals a more complex and more attractive sensibility than that of the critic; he is, in many ways, nearer to our own age. He will probably better stand the test of time.[4] But in the history of literature, as in that of ideas, Arnold the prose writer is a more commanding figure; he has exercised a wider influence. He has been in the broadest sense the preacher of the doctrine of intellectual culture, to a civilization mainly satisfied with the success of empirical ambitions.

To preach upon the text of intelligence is a ticklish task to a man with a sense of humour. It demands a dexterous touch. Arnold is not always free from a shade of priggishness. His magistral authority was at times too sure of itself; the more so, as he does not on all occasions follow out his own principle to the end. He wants the activity of the mind to play freely round all habits and beliefs, and to accept no values unless they have been revised. This current of critical thought bathing the dim unconscious recesses of the soul, and restoring its spontaneous freshness to all the inner personality of man, this spirit of calm self-possession, remind us of the teaching of the Greeks, and of that of Goethe. The wisdom which Arnold thus invokes is elevating and beautiful. He has lived up to it to the utmost of his ability, and has given attractive examples of his faith. Still, he has not risen at all points to the height of his own ideal. Prejudices, narrowness of outlook, passive ways of thinking, have limited or warped his mental perspective in certain directions. His social and moral philosophy is at once bold and timorous. He was unconscious of the fact that in many respects he could not and did not want to see clearly. Yet his outlook is none the less honest and frank, and often proves very penetrating.

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[1] The expression "Broad Church" was proposed by A. H. Clough, employed by Stanley in 1850, while in 1853 it was looked upon as an accepted term.

[2] The principal figures in this movement are Benjamin Jowett, 1817–95; Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, 1815–81; Mark Pattison, 1813–84. The main episodes in its history are the publication of critical studies, *Essays and Reviews*, 1860; that of the *Commentary on the Pentateuch* (1862–79) by Bishop Colenso, and that of the *Ecce Homo* (1865) of J. R. Seeley (1834–95).

[3] Matthew, son of Thomas Arnold (see above, sect. 4), born in 1822, studied at Rugby and Oxford, and from 1851 onwards performed the duties of Inspector of Schools, a post which he retained for the greater part of his life. After several first efforts in poetry he published *The Strayed Reveller and Other Poems*, 1849; *Empedocles on Etna*, 1852; two series of *Poems* (1853–55), and a tragedy in verse, *Merope* (1858). The *New Poems* of 1867 included a few additions, but only in the nature of short pieces. After a mission to the Continent to study pedagogical systems he wrote *The Popular Education of France*, etc., 1861; *A French Eton*, 1864; *Schools and Universities on the Continent*, 1868. Appointed to the Chair of Poetry at Oxford he published several works of criticism: *On Translating Homer*, 1861; *Essays in Criticism*, 1865 (idem, second series, 1885); *On the Study of Celtic Literature*, 1867. The last phase of his life was devoted to the criticism of society (*Culture and Anarchy*, 1869), and of religion in England: *Saint Paul and Protestantism*, 1870; *Literature and Dogma*, 1873; *God and the Bible*, 1875; *Last Essays on Church and Religion*, 1877. He died in 1888. *Poems*, 1840–67, Oxford ed., 1909; *Works*, ed. de luxe, 1904; *Letters*, ed. by Russel, 1901. See the studies or biographies of Saintsbury, 1899; Paul (English Men of Letters), 1902; Dawson, *Matthew Arnold and His Relation to the Thought of His Time*, 1904; Bickley, *Matthew Arnold and His Poetry*, 1911.

[4] For the poet in Arnold, see chap. vi. sect. 6.

Arnold as a literary critic has clearly defined doctrines, a scale of merits founded in principle. With him a new school may be said to begin. None of his predecessors had had such a coherent set of ideas, nor had they applied or explained their views with so elegant a precision. The profound desire of this age to return to a standard of beauty which reason could comprehend, and whose form reason could control, is revealed best of all in the effort of Arnold to renew classical tradition, to base it on the now better understood example of the Ancients, on that of the Moderns as well, wherever the latter have sought to respect the sense of balance, so essential a feature of art. He is full of antiquity—above all of the Greek models—but, on the other hand, he appreciates and he loves French measure and subtlety. The knowledge that England possesses to-day of the original genius of France has been gleaned partly from Arnold. He judges books as one trained to take account of their construction, and of the finer shades of their style. His judgments, however, are subject to whims. He depends more than he thinks upon his intuitive sympathies; and these with Arnold are sometimes at fault—as in the case of Shelley—or evince a very imperfect sense of the true proportions of their objects. He is not anxious enough, either, to submit to the discipline of study; his method at times savours of improvisation. But he has written of Homer better than any of his contemporaries; his theory of the Celtic spirit, however adventurous it may be, has been fruitful; the preferences implied in his admirations disclose a personal temperament, at once orthodox and capable of initiative. Finally, he defends his taste with a lucidity of expression and an easy eloquence which not only surpass Macaulay by far, but are in themselves merits of a high order.

The newest and strongest part of Arnold's criticism is that which bears upon the mind of the English people. He believes in formulæ, and employs them unreservedly. The English aristocracy is "barbarian" to him, the middle class are "Philistines," while the people are a "populace"; and thus these three classes suffer in diverse ways, and to different degrees, through an under-estimation of spiritual values. This arises from the fact that in the secular struggle waged between the powers making for intellectual liberty—"Hellenism"—and those advocating moral discipline—"Hebraism"—the English nation has taken sides with the latter; so that the exclusive preoccupation of conduct has withered up souls which are being lost in their eagerness for salvation. The need of England is to seek for the refinement of culture, the "sweetness" of a "light" which shines only for the beauty of the radiance it sheds. Arnold has felt the hard utilitarian element that is to be found in a certain kind of moral obsession; he has felt the virtue of disinterestedness; but he has not carried his analysis to its ultimate psychological elements. About the same period, Nietzsche was working out a singularly more vigorous doctrine. Arnold's criticism, however, does not lack strength; and although he is indebted to Goethe for the principle of it, he proceeds to apply it to his compatriots in a way that is indeed revealing.

From the criticism of manners, Arnold passes by a natural transition to that of religion. In matters biblical he cannot lay claim to any particular competence, and his adversaries have not failed to reproach him with it. Though he lacks the authority necessary to solve exegetical problems, he extends to the domain of religious beliefs the exercise of an illuminating common sense, sharpened by inner observation. Although the line of his thought does not exactly coincide with the central direction of the Rationalist movement, and despite the reserves he arrays against the modern ambitions of science, he really continues the effort of liberal theology. In place of dogma, and of the definite inspiration of the Scriptures, he substitutes a kind of general philosophy, which brings them into accord with all the creative movement of human conscience. The thought of Renan, that of Strauss and of Feuerbach, are in the background of this doctrine. The conception of the Godhead divests itself, as it were, of personality, and tends towards an ethical pantheism. We perceive God as a diffused current of volition and desire which, within us and without, is directed towards the moral ends of the universe. The enemies of true religious zeal are, on the one hand, indifference and, on the other, fanaticism; the most desirable form of faith is that which is regulated by a discriminating and cultured intelligence.

There is nothing of the revolutionary spirit in the work of Arnold. In making certain sacrifices, which he deems inevitable, to the principle of criticism in all fields, he is but following the instinct of a conservative nature. But he intellectualizes and brings to consciousness the national preferences which he accepts, and in so doing he adopts a strongly hostile attitude as to the national habit of empirical unconsciousness. He is the prophet of equanimity by way of a flexible habit of reasoning. The prose-writer in Arnold and the poet are both at the centre of a period, of which they represent the distinctive character with all its dominant traits.

6. Evolution: Darwin, Spencer and Huxley.—The work of Darwin[1] cannot be said to belong to literature, if in the definition of literary work is presupposed an effort towards artistic expression. But it has most powerfully affected the thought of a whole century; it has modified the outlook of the scientist, and, gradually in turn, that of every thinker; while its contagious influence has spread over imaginative life and the æsthetic activity of the mind. It is a work which takes its place in the front rank of the history of ideas, and, therefore, the historian of literature cannot afford to neglect it.

Darwin's is the very type of the scientific intelligence; he is essentially the man in whom the desire for verified truth is the ruling passion, indeed almost the only passion. The kind of truth which he wants is concrete, and based on experience. The need for simple unity which is the mainspring of all inquiry that aims at an explanation, is in the case of Darwin accompanied and corrected by a manifold desire for caution. He expects to find reality difficult and complex; he has never found it otherwise; and in a supple and patient way, his judgment has clung fast to the habits of things, so as to be moulded by them in the process. For twenty years he has known how to keep back an intuitive generalization, allowing it to mature with time. Thus it was that his name remained associated inseparably with a hypothesis which he was not the first to conceive, and for which he has not supplied the formula which, to-day, is looked upon as the most satisfactory. Scrupulous and modest as he was, he has not, however, done full justice to his predecessors; and the theory of natural selection tends to become more and more subordinated to that of adaptation. The seeds which Lamarck has sown are more fruitful than his. Yet Darwin's wonderful sense of objectivity, together with the virtue of his intellectual example, leave him the honour of having won over the minds of his epoch to the new idea. In so shining a manner was he worthy of being trusted, that he made trust an obligation; and he made doubt a moral impossibility.

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[1] Charles Robert Darwin, grandson of Erasmus Darwin (see above, Book IV. chap. v. sect. 2), was born in 1809 at Shrewsbury, studied at Edinburgh and Cambridge, and was attracted at an early age to the study of Natural Science. From 1831 to 1836 he journeyed as a naturalist in the *Beagle,* a cruise which brought him into touch with life in all parts of the world. In 1842 he settled down to toil and study in the country until his death in 1882. Before 1840 he had already conceived the first idea of his theory, but laboured at it for many years, putting it to the test of repeated experiments, before drawing up his deductive principles. In 1858, in agreement with Alfred Russel Wallace, who had, on his part, come to analogous conclusions, he contributed a paper to the Linnean Society on "The Tendency of Species to Form Varieties," etc. In 1859 he published *The Origin of Species,* etc.; and then followed in succession his great works, notably *The Variations of Plants and Animals under Domestication,* 1868; *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex,* 1871; *The Expressions of the Emotions,* etc., 1872. See *Life and Letters,* ed. by Francis Darwin, 1887; study by Poulton, *Darwin and the Theory of Natural Selection,* 1896.

The Origin of Species opens to man a view of his past, and probably of his future, very different from that which had been current since ancient times. Darwin is fully aware of it; and yet his book, fraught with the emotion of great discoveries, is devoid of rhetorical effects, and even of all attempt at eloquence. He explains facts, discusses his views, and concludes with circumspection and simplicity. Despite the breadth of the theme, the poetry of imagination with which it is pregnant, and the anguish of the metaphysical curiosity which it encourages but does not satisfy, the sober flow of this prose hardly betrays the slightest tremor of emotion. There is no art here but honesty. This style is nevertheless attractive by virtue of the unfailing interest of the subject; and it shows a natural or acquired gift of clear expression. No matter how varied the aspects of the facts under examination, and how many the reserves and qualifications to be made, the progress of the demonstration, if at times slow, is never interrupted.

Darwin is not without knowing that his thesis—the variability of species, and their derivation by a continuous process of development from one or several elementary organisms—comes into conflict with the orthodox version of the history of the world. But he does not seem to give the point much attention, beyond remarking that, if he modifies the accepted idea of Divine creation, his doctrine is compatible with another idea, and one which is not less acceptable to the thinking mind. All about him, however, the latent conflict was turning into an open fight, and his disciples were led to take an active part in it.

Spencer[1] stands in a pronounced contrast to Darwin. He is more of the philosopher than the scientist; or, at least, he is more attracted to the process of generalizing than to the long and meticulous research which leads up to it. By training he is scientific and modern, and has, or wants to have, the outlook of a realist. But he displays a wide knowledge of physical or social reality, rather than a very full command of any special branch. He is more skilled in the handling of abstract ideas, and at the same time more able to adapt his thoughts to the embellishment of form. He has been charged with verbosity and pedantry; but the fault is to be found in the matter rather than in the style. He says what he wishes to say without any undue expense of language; and his lighter writings, as, for example, his articles on education, afford pleasant reading. His intellectual life was fertile and varied; despite an occasional stiffness, his was an animated mind; he should be ranked among writers.

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[1] Herbert Spencer, born at Derby in 1820, of a lower middle-class family of Dissenters, was educated privately, and strongly attracted to science; followed for some time the profession of engineer, then wrote political articles (*The Proper Sphere of Government*, 1842). In *Social Statics* (1850) and *Principles of Psychology* (1855), the outlines of his general doctrine are easily discernible. Between 1855 and 1860 he drew up the plan of his system, of which the *First Principles* (published in 1862) form the sketch. To the execution of the vast programme thus traced out he devoted a life of intense labour, in which he enjoyed the encouragement of a group of kindred minds. Success crowned his efforts, and finally he enjoyed a kind of sovereign fame as a philosopher both in England and abroad. Besides the *Principles of Biology* (1864–67), *New Principles of Psychology* (1870–72), *Principles of Sociology* (1876–96), and *Principles of Ethics* (1879–93), he published *Essays*, etc. (1858–74), *Education* (1861), *The Classification of the Sciences* (1864), *The Man versus the State* (1884). After his death in 1903 there appeared an *Autobiography* (1904). See Duncan, *Life and Letters of Spencer*, 1908; Thomson, *Spencer* (English Men of Science), 1906; H. Elliot, *Herbert Spencer*, 1917.

If his work, and his fame, impress us to-day by their ambitious proportion and their subsequent collapse, it is because they were both built upon a hastily prepared and unstable foundation. The synthesis in which he incorporated all the known results in every branch of knowledge has not stood the further progress of specialized research, nor that of the general philosophy of the sciences.

The hope of being able to integrate the whole of knowledge in one single formula was decidedly premature. The attempt, however, was nobly inspired, and obeyed a legitimate craving of reflection. In their way the *First Principles* are a metaphysical poem, where the vastness of the imagination displayed retains in itself a kind of interest. The ingenuity called forth by such a task as that of moulding into one system the theory of the nebula, the law of gravitation, and that of the conservation of energy, lends to this great architectural fabric of ideas, however unsteady it may be, the beauty of the largest intellectual structures. And when human thought in its soaring flight reaches the threshold of the unknowable, Spencer checks its course with words not too unworthy of the majesty of the subject. However fortified he may be against doubt, even when he sets down in peremptory fashion an impassable limit to intuition, he is not without experiencing at times the thrill of the beyond.

The applications he has made of the theory of evolution to particular sciences, or of particular sciences to an evolutionary plan already traced out, are of very unequal value. There are in this imposing series some solid parts, which will be lasting. In his psychology, as in his ethics and his theory of social life, Spencer has mingled accurate and sharp observations, original inductions, with an excessive love of system. His theory of a psycho-physiological mechanism is too simple, and now out of date. He has not furnished, as he believed, a broader objective foundation for the moral doctrine of utility. But his effort to merge utilitarianism in the experience of an intuitive perception of duty, and to widen the field of human obligation from the primitive tribe to the comity of nations, perhaps opens the way to a system of ethics at once positive and idealistic. His unbending economic individualism, and his abhorrence of anything in the way of a developed collective organization, seem to answer the demands of a temperament, or the fanaticism of a sect, rather than the serious lesson of facts. But when Spencer has ceased to be, even for his belated disciples, the Aristotle of modern times, he will retain the interest of a strong personality, broad enough to realize the necessary amalgamation of philosophy and science.

He was not only a clever user of other men's thoughts. His mind had been won by the principle of evolution before he came to hear of Darwin. He borrowed copiously, and in every direction, but the materials of his borrowing were moulded as he wanted them. He has his place in the history of ideas.

Huxley,[1] no more than Spencer, can be regarded as a mere popularizer of knowledge. He stands out as a person of originality, with strong features.

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[1] Thomas Henry Huxley, born in 1825 near London, was the son of a schoolmaster; studied medicine and became attached in the capacity of naturalist to a cruising expedition in the East. His first works on zoology attracted attention; in the front rank of those who associated themselves with the teaching and investigation of Darwinian theories, he played an active part in their diffusion; was looked upon as the leader of the scientific movement,

While Darwin holds himself aloof from the struggle, and Spencer comes down from the heights of system to the things of actuality, Huxley, on the other hand, intimately associates science with daily life. The group of intellectuals, those thinkers with whom the passion for truth is an actual motive of conduct, find in him their leader. On more than one occasion he comes into open conflict with orthodox opinion. Although he does not shirk the fight, he is not a gratuitously aggressive writer. There is no superficiality in his clearness of thought; nor is his verve, at times teasing, ever indelicate. He has an intuitive sense of moral feelings; and while he accepts absolutely the doctrine of the close parallelism between the facts of consciousness and those of the nerve system, his horizon is not that of a narrow materialism. By making knowledge human, and by setting an example of a life full of generous activity, based upon principles which traditional prejudice had deemed pernicious, he has done more than any other to win for the scientific spirit its full and unqualified acceptance among men. A nation where the quality of character, and the social value of personality, count for much, did not grudge him a warm esteem; and this experience has left deep lasting traces.

He was, at first, before everything the apostle of transformism. By degrees, he raised an individual philosophy upon this basis. Like Spencer, he refuses to penetrate into the realms of the unknown, and in order to define his attitude he invents the missing word: "agnosticism." But to better purpose than Spencer, he preserves the critical freedom of his mind, and does not allow himself to become mentally imprisoned within the imaginative structure of evolutionism. His thought remains flexible enough to admit that if all outward evidence seems to reduce spirit to matter, at the same time all reflection reduces matter to spirit. His religion of truth, clashing with the doctrine of the Church, shaped itself as a form of irreligion. It retains, however, for anyone who probes it under the surface, the quality of a positive belief. It feeds on a sufficient fund of feeling, and is strongly enough bound up with the intuitive reasons for life, to stand the test both of practice and of moral health. Huxley has been, in more and other ways perhaps than he thought, one of the masters of modern faith.[1] To all the problems of conduct and of society he has, according to his lights, offered answers almost always instinct with a generous clear-sightedness.[2]

To be consulted: A. W. Benn, *History of English Rationalism in the XIXth Century*, 1906; *Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. xii. chaps. xiii. xiv.; vol. xiii. chap. xiv.; vol. iv. chaps. i. ii. viii.; M. L. Cazamian, *Le Roman et les Idées en Angleterre, L'Influence de la Science*, 1923; J. E. Courtney, *Freethinkers of the XIXth Century*, 1920; Darwin, *Life and Letters*, by his son, 1887; Duncan, *Life and Letters of H. Spencer*, 1908; O. Elton, *A Survey of English Literature*, 1830–80, 1920; Sir L. Stephen, *The English Utilitarians*, vol. iii., 1900; V. F. Storr, *The Development of English Theology in the XIXth Century*, 1913, etc.; H. Walker, *The Literature of the Victorian Era*, 1910.

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took part in the keenest controversies of his day, and died in 1895. The following may be mentioned among his diverse writings: *Man's Place in Nature*, 1893; *Lay Sermons, etc.*, 1870; *Collected Essays* (9 vols.), 1894; *Scientific Memoirs*, 1898–1901. See *Life and Letters*, by L. Huxley, 1900.

[1] With Spencer and Huxley must be named George Henry Lewes (1817–78), who sided with the disciples of Positivism (*Comte's Philosophy of the Positive Sciences*, 1853); wrote a life of Goethe which was for long a standard work (1855); then studied problems of various kinds in the realm of personal ideas (*Problems of Life and Mind*, etc., 3 series, 1874–79).

[2] Another interesting figure of the rationalist movement is that of Walter Bagehot (1826–77), political theorist, historian, economist and critic. In *Physics and Politics* (1872) he applied to human society the theory of evolution. *The English Constitution*, 1867; *Literary Studies*, 1879; *Biographical Studies*, 1880; *Economic Studies*, 1880.

CHAPTER III

THE IDEALISTIC REACTION

1. Origin and Unity of the Movement.—The tendencies of the Victorian age group themselves naturally round two axes; the main one being that traced out by the rationalistic and scientific movement, while the other, of almost equal importance, is to be found in the renascence of idealism. The latter, from the psychological point of view, is even more fertile in artistic expressions; from the purely literary standpoint it is the more important of the two. It is not so in the general mental activity of the time; intellectually, the epoch is more affected by the work of the first movement. The second, a necessary factor in the constitution itself of this age, interests a considerably smaller number of minds; it does not attract a larger number of eminent men; its influence does spread among the mass of average temperaments, but not to a greater degree, and perhaps even less, than the inverse movement. At bottom, it is not spontaneous, but derivative; it is first and foremost a reaction.

No doubt it can be very directly traced back to some origins at least in the preceding period. A vast association of emotional and imaginative tendencies, all inclined towards an intuitive philosophy and a kind of organic morality, it represents, as it were, an offshoot of Romanticism, whose inner impulse it prolongs and diversifies. The doctrine of Carlyle, the sentimental art of Dickens, the religious revival of Oxford, the æsthetic and social crusade of Ruskin, are one and all in psychological affinity with the most profound spiritual impulses which had produced the work of a Wordsworth, a Shelley and a Keats. New elements come to add themselves to these impulses, without altering their essential qualities. There is no real break, but rather an unseen transmission, and a virtual equivalence, between Blake and Ruskin.

The equivalence, however, is mainly virtual. Carlyle and his disciples are not aware that their idealism is a transposed variety of Romantic mysticism. Blinded by the consciousness of conflicts on secondary points, Carlyle believes that he is, in his main purpose and effort, the enemy and destroyer of Romanticism. Newman and Ruskin seek their precursors not in the generation of yesterday, but in a distant past; and their faith finds its precedents in the Middle Ages. Dickens, on the other hand, is the thorough embodiment of his time, even when he sets out to criticize it; and he readily scoffs at what he considers the ridiculousness of a belated Romanticism. Nevertheless, all are stimulated to thought, to action, and to the affirmation of themselves, by one kind of spiritual suffering, in which the dominant note is the irritation of a discontented sensibility. It is against the spirit of their age—against the overwhelming progress of rationalism, of science, of industrial selfishness—that they meditate or glow with feeling, and that they write or speak. One cannot understand their attitudes without having surveyed at one glance the matter-of-fact civilization which encircles them, forces itself upon them, and prompts them to revolt.

Under the varied expressions of their faith, the masters of Idealism, be it philosophical, humanitarian, religious, artistic or social in aim, obey the same instincts; the deepest roots of their individual beliefs intermingle; and the different aspects of reality which they denounce belong to a coherent whole.

Behind the middle-class, reasonable soberness of life in the Victorian age, there does lurk one single counter-movement of ardours and enthusiasms.

2. **Idealism and Philosophy: Carlyle.**—Carlyle[1] proclaims, with singular energy and authority, the place which he wishes to occupy in the moral history of his country. The historian of literature, just as the student of ideas, cannot do better than grant him this desire. While figuring as the apostle of instinct and the adversary of analysis, he has, it must be admitted, a clear enough comprehension of the struggle he is waging to be able to define it without the hesitation of uncertainty. After an anxious early youth, stirred by the cravings of the intelligence, greedily desirous of the knowledge to be gleaned from books, and open to all the influences of pure science and reason, he tries to find himself, only to discover, at last, that he has become the bitter antagonist of what he had hitherto revered. His personality is moulded for life in the course of the crisis which brings about its sudden maturity. He rejects and condemns the lust of the understanding, which around him has seized upon an ever larger number of minds. Since his century is bound by unbreakable chains to this effort of the reasoning thinkers, he will, henceforth, be the enemy of his century.

This intuition of self is not an arbitrary creation. Carlyle discovers the deepest foundation of his personality, and rests upon it with a firmness which nothing will ever shake. In this way he resumes contact with all the heritage which ancestral experience has accumulated, with a temperament of soul whose wealth of dormant ideas he will now realize and cultivate. His Scottish heredity is mixed; in it contrary tendencies work side by side; a keen utilitarian finesse of thought, or shall we say logical disposition, is closely allied with a vague and pent-up mysticism. It is in the secular reserves of a latent Puritanism, as well as in a deeply spiritual sense of life, that Carlyle finds an untapped vein of rich ore, to be exploited for his literary work. No one has said better than Carlyle how much he owes to his father, his family and the education of his boyhood. These are his veritable lineage. The genius of German literature is the favourable influence that comes to stimulate a ripening originality, to quicken its consciousness of itself, and to supply it with assimilable ideas, thus enabling it to emerge and develop.

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[1] Thomas Carlyle, son of a master stone-mason, born in 1795 in the southwest of Scotland, studied at Edinburgh, planned to become a minister, then gave up the idea; was for a short time a schoolmaster, educating himself and learning German. He earned a living by doing drudge work for publishers, experienced an interval of depression and spiritual crisis (1821) which, however, established his belief. In 1826 he married Jane Welsh, and resided with her for six years in the solitude of Craigenputtock. Translated *Wilhelm Meister* (1824) and wrote a *Life of Schiller* (1825); corresponded with Goethe, and contributed several critical essays which attracted attention in the reviews (*Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, 4 vols., 1839). *Sartor Resartus* appeared in *Fraser's Magazine*, 1833–34; as a volume, Boston, 1836; London, 1838. In 1834 Carlyle settled in London, where he won fame by the success of his *French Revolution* (1837). From a course of lectures came *On Heroes and Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (1841). A social pamphlet, *Chartism* (1839), was followed by a treatise, *Past and Present* (1843), and a series of satires, *Latter-Day Pamphlets* (1850). In the meanwhile appeared *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches* (1845). After the *Life of John Stirling* (1851) came in succession the volumes of *The History of Frederick II. of Prussia* (1858–65). The death of his wife in 1866 began the period of his old age, saddened by regrets and coloured by remorse. He prepared his own *Reminiscences* (published in 1883), as well as the *Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle* (published 1883); and in a loneliness as great as was his fame he passed away in 1881. *Works*, People's ed., 1874; ed. by Traill, 1901. *Sartor Resartus*, ed. by MacMechan, 1896; *French Revolution*, ed. by Rose, 1909; *Correspondence with Emerson*, ed. by Norton, 1883; *Correspondence with Goethe*, 1897; *Letters*, 1826–36, ed. 1888; *New Letters*, ed. by A. Carlyle, 1904; *Love Letters*, ed. by A. Carlyle, 1909. See Froude: *History of the First Forty Years, etc.*, 1882; *Life in London*, 1884; biographies by Garnett (Great Writers), 1887; Nichol (English Men of Letters), 1892; Wilson (*Carlyle till Marriage*), 1923; studies by Taine (*L'idéalisme anglais*, etc.), 1864; Craig (*Making of Carlyle*), 1908; Barthélmy; Evans (*Makers of Literature*), 1909; Cazamian (*Grands écrivains étrangers*), 1913; Rowe (*Carlyle as a Critic of Literature*), 1910; Carré (*Goethe en Angleterre*), 1920; Ralli (*Guide to Carlyle*), 1920.

From the day when Carlyle fully recognized his spiritual vocation in the struggle against an intellectualism, the supreme example of which was to be found in eighteenth-century France, he took up his stand at the opposite pole of philosophy and practice; from now onwards he paid homage to the Germanic school of thought, which openly condemns the Latin fondness and the demand for lucidity. By so radical and decisive a choice, and one in which he reveals his true self, he violently broke up the complex psychological unity created by the spirit of conciliation in England; he forced his generation to face the mixed nature of their tradition, calling upon them to cling stubbornly to one hereditary element only, to retrench and to sacrifice the rest. Such is the meaning of the war that he waged. He did not become the apostle of another country's suggestion; but it was the magnetism of German thought which helped him to polarize very definitely the instincts of his nature.

His general theory of the world is full of influences from the same source. Many are his borrowings from Herder, Fichte, Schelling and Novalis, as from J. P. Richter and Goethe. *Sartor Resartus* is an ebullition of ideas and images many of which bear the stamp of their Germanic origin; and the feverish zeal which animates this strange book is like an exaggerated form of the transcendental enthusiasm to which, according to popular imagination, the disciples of Kant were keyed up. But it matters little whether the theme of the "Clothes" —of universal symbolism—or that of the development and succession of forms, is derived from such or such a precise source. The passionate ardour which brings these themes into prominence wells up from the deep personality of Carlyle himself. It is the spirit of biblical prophecy, the exaltation of the Puritan apocalypses, that fire the fervour of this philosophic poet who represents, one might say, the fusion of a metaphysical idealism with the burning faith of an Ezekiel.

Sartor Resartus is a veritable storehouse of ideas, a centre of germinating thought. The enigmatic figure of its hero affords Carlyle the opportunity to give us an autobiography in disguise. Here he resumes, stage by stage, and in striking fashion, the history of his soul's development, from egoistical disquietude and the morbid preoccupation of self, through the "everlasting no," to the certainty and affirmation of belief. The crisis through which he passes becomes thus the centre of a system of individual duties, which is extended very soon to embrace social relations. Modern society, in Carlyle's opinion, is diseased; and the Romanticists' malady of the soul, puerile doubt and pain, are the signs of that inner corruption. The Byronic age must be followed by that of Goethe; the teaching of *Wilhelm Meister,* interpreted by a conscience more Christian than Dionysiac, brings to the world the gospel of healing. Self-forgetfulness, renunciation, action, such are the laws which govern the psychological well-being of the soul. To each personality they bring a strong sense of organized unity, without which no vital success is possible. It is through them also that mankind as a whole will find the key to its rebirth. All human transformation springs from within. The outward garb of institutions, of practical activities, and manners, will be renovated by the effect of a spiritual rejuvenation.

Such are the main ideas round which the work of Carlyle develops; he gives them repeated and vehement expression; applies them to history, and to the conduct of nations. According to him, that mystic element which penetrates the reality of everyday life and which sustains it—the Divine effusion—is concentrated through a kind of superior intuition in the hearts of certain privileged beings; the guides, the pastors of the flock, are known by their sincerity, by the inexplicable assurance which constitutes their strength, by the success which crowns their stubborn will in the face of all obstacles, and which sanctions, as it were, the fact of their spontaneous adaptation to the wishes of the universe. Their "heroism" consists in an unbroken contact with the supernatural centre whence all knowledge and all incentive to action are diffused. The past history of mankind is fully permeated by the irradiation of those great inspired souls; they have left their stamp upon successive civilizations; and the one which is just beginning has as its legislators the modern heirs of priests and kings, the masters of thought, the men of letters.

There is no other philosophy of history. To Carlyle the French Revolution represents the end of a society whose soul is dead, the collapse of a vast organization of deceptive appearances. This destruction, certainly necessary, brings with it no new principle of life; no hero appears who is strong enough to create, out of the denial of injustice, a new system of justice; and thus the logical course of liberated passions leads France from anarchy to chaos, even to the day when the desperate call for order, in itself creative because it is part of the permanent will of things, brings forward a Bonaparte, saviour and tyrant alike. On the contrary, a Cromwell and a Frederick II., the one emerging from religious revolt, the other from war, outlive the negative missions which they had to fulfil by force in each case, and thus come to display all their talent of intuitive constructiveness in the creation of a system of social discipline.

The war waged by supernaturally guided action against evil is everlasting; the Divine plan of the universe, in daily jeopardy, has to be each day readjusted. The century of mechanical invention has its special problems, of a not less grievous nature. To-day, the seat of the trouble is in society. Industry is a force for good, but blind to aught else save its own interests. It crushes humanity; it attracts and then disperses unceasingly whole masses of miserable beings; and the doctors of political economy see no other salvation than the still freer and more rapid working of its machinery. A doctrine of scholarly passiveness will not save society. The Chartist movement, the turbulent rise and oncoming tide of a suffering nation, obeys a cosmic rhythm; it carries within itself the principle of its legitimacy. It cannot be held back by any vain rational dogma. In order to restrain the riotous mob, one must appease the just passion which rouses it. An organization of labour is indispensable. In it the imperious note shall be dominant, for order without authority is non-existent; but it shall be well-intentioned and indulgent, and shall grant to the living tools that create wealth the sacred rights of human personalities; it will replace economic contracts by common accord between man and his fellow. And the model for all this will be found in the government of souls by the Church, as it was in the years of Mediævalism when the vigilant abbot was a temporal sovereign. A new aristocracy is growing in the persons of the captains of industry; let them rise to the height of their task, for the future is in their hands.

Carlyle calls upon them and, at the same time, denounces them, because they will not heed him. The tone of his voice becomes more and more bitter with the middle years of the century. His prophetic countenance hardens in its irritation. He reproves everything of his epoch—the lies, the cowardice, the self-satisfied endeavours of a mean, half-hearted courage. Democracy, progress, the reign of mechanism, all whet his ire; Darwinism scandalizes him. The life of society remains restless; the inner life is still being eaten into by doubt; and from the last rags of a worn-out Hebraism, a young faith, Christian and free, has not yet been strong enough to disengage itself. . . . Carlyle's last days are spent in an atmosphere of almost unrelieved sadness.

His work, however, had not been unfruitful. Carlyle could not see that it had contributed in restoring the vitality of his age; or if he saw, he could hardly find pleasure in such a success, because the mediocrity of his age was odious to him. But he had succeeded, despite everything, in infusing into a society threatened with decadence, the necessary psychological energy for its survival. He had evangelized a small élite, stimulated or dimly awakened a greater number of consciences; if England was recovering possession of herself, was attending to certain of her wounds, and had healed some unbearable dissensions, it was partly due to Carlyle's influence. The average tone of souls was now, to a perceptible degree, less relaxed; there was a clearer and firmer ring in the assertion of men's will. The determination not to die had learnt from him some of the secrets by which the threat of death is averted or retarded. It was not enough, however, for Carlyle; he would be satisfied with nothing less than the reign of a noble justice or virtue. But beneath and beyond his own thought, his most instinctive desire had indeed been that of national salvation; and, in this sense, he could have admitted that he had received his reward.

His moral influence is not spent. Still, his books no longer have new suggestions to offer. What constituted their fresh value has long since been absorbed, and the readers of to-day have ceased to seek them for the revelation of their wisdom. To us they are works pulsating with eloquent appeal, illumined by an austere poetry, moving indeed; but their art bears the stamp of imperfection, because its originality is deeply coloured by obstinacy and capriciousness.

Carlyle's style is one of the most personal. In its sincerity, for it expresses a temperament, it is not devoid of a certain affectation; it testifies to a fondness for violent habits of mind and feeling. It is a style that has been moulded into shape by the maturing of his genius under the action of an exalted sense of prophecy, of a spiritual enthusiasm, and under the influence of an intimate contact with German thought. The language of his early years has balance and simplicity. With *Sartor Resartus,* a mystic philosopher and an impetuous writer jointly put in an appearance. Construction, the sense of proportion, the reciprocal affinities of words, vanish at the same time; an unquenchable ardour breaks in upon and destroys the calm connectedness of thought. The reader has the impression of some great stream of burning lava pouring forth, and bringing with it a vocabulary that is rough, abrupt, mixed, thoroughly saturated with Saxon intensity and concrete vividness. And this prose, when once solid, has the sharp edges, the breaks, the dislocated formations, of cooled volcanic rocks. In the order of powerfulness its effects are incomparable; but more winning are the rare occasions when its passion and its irony relax, and the evocation of the seer is softened by suggestion and dream.

As the thought of Carlyle is all made up of faith, of eager affirmation, or scathing criticism, his work is that of a poet, untrammeled by regular rhythm, or incapable of it, whose energy spends itself in vigorous, brief flights of expression. His imagination, however, the strongest of his faculties, lends unity in movement and in tone to his broader narratives and pictures. The inspiration which carries his *French Revolution* forward has the amplitude of epic grandeur. To Carlyle objectivity is impossible; he does not know what detachment from self means, nor does he possess the fine perception of the pure artist in souls. But in his sympathy he can thoroughly grasp the characters which harmonize with his own, and so re-create them. His portrait of Cromwell is admirable. He is great by virtue of his intuition. That divining power he possesses to search the past or the present, fallible and limited as it is, casts forth, when favoured by spiritual grace, flashes of vivid light and even of beauty which are among the treasures of literature.

3. **Dickens and the Social Novel.**—(*a*) DICKENS.—There is not any injustice to Dickens[1] in going straight to the central feeling which gives life to his

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[1] Charles Dickens, born at Portsmouth in 1812, the son of a small naval functionary, spent his early years in Kent and received an incomplete education; in London, where his

work; and that feeling is social. Through it he is linked up with a whole group of writers, and has a place in a great movement of the time.

No novelist before Dickens had treated the lower middle classes on such broad lines or in so frank a way. He studies them not as a detached, superior kind of observer, but as one on their own level; a sympathy, an immediate community of impressions, and, as it were, an instinctive fraternity, thus impregnate his study. Be the tone that of pathos or of humour, the mediocre lives on which he focuses his and our attention come, as if naturally, to acquire the dignity of art. Such is the permanent foundation of his realism. But below it, in the inner realms of consciousness, we feel the quivering image, the anguish of soul-debasing poverty. The unforgettable experience of his early youth—that humiliating phase of his life—becomes thus one of the decisive elements in the formation of his personality. Even when those hardships had been left behind, Dickens could never forget them. It was this dim memory, at the secret core of his very life-success, that continued to sustain the energy of his effort to secure his material independence against all risks. It helped to intensify as well the multiple suggestion of active charity which made Dickens an apostle, and turned his work into a gospel of humanitarianism.

Considered from this point of view, Dickens has his place in the Idealistic reaction. His influence combined itself with that of Carlyle, whose authority as a teacher he accepted or felt. But his most important significance is not that he shared in the philanthropic crusade, that he showed up abuses, or prepared those fits of moral compunction from which reforms have sprung. Despite the practical benefits which did accrue from such a task, it cannot be said that Dickens was always happily inspired in this direction;[1] indeed, his art suffered from the bitter or strained mood which usually goes with a thesis of denunciation. Above all, he has stimulated the national sensibility which was slowly wasting away in the dry atmosphere of a utilitarian age; he has re-established balance and a more wholesome order in the proportionate values

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father had been imprisoned for debts, he was employed in a blacking warehouse. After this period of struggle, he passed some time in a secondary school, was apprenticed to a solicitor, then worked for various newspapers in the capacity of Parliamentary reporter or provincial correspondent. In 1833 he began his pen-pictures of life with *Sketches by Boz* (published in volume, 1836). The demand of a publisher for the text of a humorous collection of stories, to which illustrations were to be supplied, resulted in the series of the *Pickwick Papers* (published 1836–37). Their success was tremendous and placed him in the front rank of writers. He then published in monthly instalments *Oliver Twist* (1837–38), *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838–39), *The Old Curiosity Shop, Barnaby Rudge* (1840–41). A voyage to the United States supplied him with *American Notes* (1842), and also inspired his *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843–44). In 1843–48 appeared the *Christmas Books* (*"A Christmas Carol,"* etc.); then *Dombey and Son* (1847–48), *David Copperfield* (1849–50), *Bleak House* (1852–53), *Hard Times* (1854), *Little Dorrit* (1857–58), *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), *Great Expectations* (1860–61), *Our Mutual Friend* (1864). He died in June, 1870, leaving the incomplete novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870). He had given many public readings in England and in America (1858–68); edited periodicals (*Household Words, All the Year Round*); written for the stage; published *Pictures from Italy* (1846), *A Child's History of England* (1852–54), etc. *Works,* Gadshill ed., 1897, etc.; Bibliographical ed., 1902; Imperial ed., 1902, etc. *Letters,* 3 vols., 1880–81. See the critical biographies by Forster, 1872–74; Ward (English Men of Letters), 1882; Marzials (Great Writers), 1887; P. Fitzgerald, 1905; Chesterton, 1906; Langton (*Childhood of Dickens*), 1912; studies by Harrison (*Dickens's Place in Literature*), 1894; Gissing (*Charles Dickens, a Critical Study*), 1898; Cazamian (*Roman social en Angleterre*), 1903; Munro (*Dickens et Daudet*), 1908; Barlow (*Genius of Dickens*), 1909; W. Dibelius (*Charles Dickens*), Leipzig, 1922; Delattre (*Les Cent chefs-d'œuvre étrangers*).

[1] He denounced the "new Poor-Law" and the "workhouse" system; the rigours of the penal code as of the penitentiary system; the slowness of justice; the neglect of children; the carelessness and cruelty of a great number of private-school masters; the harsh laws for the protection of game; the bad state of sanitation in the poorer quarters of cities; the parallel excesses of the workers' unions and of the egoism of employers; the economic doctrine of "laisser-faire" and the social indifference which had been set up as a principle, etc.

of the motives of life. This psychological action is brought to its most precise and most effectual pitch in his impassioned attack on the frame of mind which supports the individualistic theory of the economists. And here the criticism of the novelist succeeds in shaking the moral foundations of a doctrine. Dickens has contributed to the salutary weakening of dogmatic egoism. On this point, his teaching comes into line with that of Carlyle and Ruskin; he takes up his stand with the prophets of sentiment against the harder advocates of rationalism. In other respects, his temperament holds him aloof from their mystic exaltation. He retains a firm hold on reality; and never loses the sense of the average conditions which all useful activities must fulfil. An ardent believer in progress, moderate in his views and of an optimistic turn of mind, he lives and thinks in complete accord with the middle-class opinions of his day.

And this middle class for Dickens is that of London, of the ancient cities and the agricultural districts of the South. He knows nothing about the feverish existence of the working classes in the Midlands and in the North, or if he does, his knowledge is very imperfect. The problems he touches upon in the course of his novels do not concern the industrial crowds which had recently developed, but rather a class of long standing, with settled and traditional characteristics. Instead of bringing us into direct contact with the epoch of machinery, and the new world, he leads us back towards the past. While his intentions are anything but reactionary, his instinctive preferences tend in this direction. The customs and habits he describes most readily savour somewhat of the archaic; only rarely does he venture beyond the field of observation which he had viewed in his youth. The joviality, the cordiality he depicts or teaches are those of a society that is still patriarchal, and that has been just perceptibly altered, but not invaded and upset by modern life. Railways will never be anything else than a sensational wonder for Dickens; it is by the tinkling of stage-coach bells that his imagination is wakened into spontaneous play.

Just as the background in his novels dates from 1825 or 1830, and underneath the symptoms of a changing age tends to link up with the eighteenth century, so his inner nature, attuned to the spirit of an animated, picturesque and familiar life, finds itself in harmony with a fairly average and a permanent type of the English temperament. Dickens appealed to the very heart of England, and she recognized herself in his pages, because he offered her a picture of herself which she loved to see; he showed her an England at her best. In a nation of very mixed tendencies—like every other nation in this respect—he singles out the features of genial humanity, and organizes them into a whole; the author himself assumes, and often gives to his characters, an expression of sympathy, the smile of humour and the cheeriness of a kind heart. This composite portrait, in which not only Mr. Pickwick but many others have their shares, has the value of a synthetic image; the moral preferences of Dickens enter into every one of its lineaments. These preferences comprise, with a warm expansiveness of heart, a liking for the peculiarities of character, and almost a taste for eccentric oddities; a realism both psychological and descriptive, without system of rigour, which springs from a lively sense of buoyant curiosity, full of an instinctive trust in life. Thus it was that the very great success of Dickens's work had the efficacy of a deep influence; that his novels told in favour of solidarity, against the egoistic spirit of the age; and that his popularity, which waned for a time after his death, has now again come into its own, and no limit can be set to its duration.

Dickens wrote rapidly. His strenuous energy was not always a substitute for careful art. His faults in taste and in style, the failings of his intuitive verve, are obvious; his literary individuality lacks polish. He sacrifices balance for the sake of intense effects; his expression obeys monotonous habits; he repeats himself to excess. His pathos is cheap or exaggerated; his imagination in its continual effort to emphasize the character of things tends rather to distort them; his vision, fond of agitated outlines, is apt to lose the very sense of repose. There is working, at the very core of his genius, a persistent spirit of Romanticism, which subordinates the actual truth, like the soberness, of every feature, to emotional or picturesque values; his realism is stirred by a feverish force of hallucination. And throughout the whole of his work, the effusion and the expression of self disturb or contradict the relative objectivity, without which there could be no novel of real life. At every turn in his stories, we come upon the favourable or unfavourable opinions of the author—a kind of sentimental commentary on his own work; and these instances of bias, intensified by polemical preferences and arguments, too often bore or annoy the reader.

Those blemishes which the contemporaries of Dickens found it easy to tolerate, while the succeeding generation censured them severely, are to-day seen in a more mellow perspective as connected with the sovereign gifts of an inspired artist. As a creator, Dickens is prodigious. The picture he has painted of the social world is one of the richest in the range of literature. His perception of things and of character is remarkable for its direct keenness and fresh vigour; while not unlimited in scope, it is, nevertheless, very wide; coloured as it is by the writer's personality, it possesses the quality of an incomparable liveliness. There is nothing scientific about it, nor does it seek to be so. It takes from reality only what interests it; and as the needs which it obeys are those of emotion and humour, the real is organized into a show of varied interest, always intense in effect, and of a tone either dramatic or facetious. Into this world no one can penetrate unless he has bowed to the artist's will; but such is the power of his charm that our critical faculty is disarmed. Few are the readers wholly proof against the spell.

At the first glance, our eye is caught by the swarming host of human figures. Over the vast fresco of his work Dickens has thrown them in plenty; they give to every part the pulsation of life itself. Still, their quality is far from equal. The writer has not created them through one and the same intuition of their original beings; he has not felt them all grow upon him with one and the same imperiousness. Their features may have been suggested from the outside by a caprice of the imagination, by a preconceived feeling, or by the demands of the plot; they may represent superficial or deductive intentions; instead of being nourished from the deeper personality of the novelist, they may be, as it were, engrafted upon more exterior elements—mere desires for antithesis or effect. Then it is that, being less directly connected with the very substance of their maker, they more closely resemble one or other of his features, and less closely resemble life. They bear the stamp of his caprice, of a bent in his mind, of some partiality in his outlook; and being devoid of any lineaments proper to themselves which might have played the part of an addition or a corrective, they are nothing but that impoverished expression of their creator's personality. There is in the work of Dickens a whole range of artificial creatures, arbitrarily drawn by his somewhat crude dramatic sense, by his hasty aversions, by his taste for drollery which often approaches caricature. And so it happens that his personages have no other interest but what they may owe to satire, melodrama or farce.

But into the satire, pathos or farce many of his heroes infuse the superior virtue of an irresistible vitality. These bear a no less recognizable imprint of their origin; a Pickwick, a Sam Weller, a Jingle, a Micawber, a Peggotty, a Dick Swiveller, a Marchioness, quite as much as a David Copperfield, are members of one family, whose common father is easily divined; they all have something of his readily compassionate humanity, and some gleam of his humour. Nevertheless, they are themselves, and develop according to their own principles. So extreme is their diversity, that they exemplify in every respect the essential individuality of living beings. But they all have an irrefutability, a witchcraft in them; no one thinks of discussing them; they come forth, and we accept them; they possess the solidity, the volume of three-dimensional figures; the personality which supports them has transferred itself entirely into them, has shaped them out according to the mysterious instinct of all its powers. This creative process, identical to that which one can find in the masterpieces of the stage, is carried through with admirable abundance and variety. Yet here again we find many grades. The best of the personages are not usually those whom Dickens has studied most deliberately and consciously. It is not often that his traitors, heroes or heroines have quite as much flavour, as much vivaciousness, or irresistible truth, as the less prominent characters which he has dashed off with a freer hand. In the episodical parts of his work, his spontaneous verve very often joins an unforgettable vigour to the literal accuracy of the outlines. And it is here, perhaps, that his masterly skill is seen at its best.

What is true of the characters is also true of the action. The most elaborately worked-out plots, in Dickens, are not the most satisfactory. Where the thesis is stressed, as in the historical and in the purely social novels (*Barnaby Rudge, A Tale of Two Cities, Hard Times*), we feel that too rigid an intention is at work; and that effort towards a concentration on a single purpose makes the whole book somewhat strained. Dickens does not possess the gift of compact logical or artistic writing. The type of narrative which best suits his inventive genius savours very much of the old picaresque model; his favourite theme is that of life, a life which lasts, which renews itself, and which is born, as it were, of itself. In the opening chapters of *Pickwick Papers* the connecting thread is of the most slender; later, it gains strength, without allowing the reader to forget the purely comic purpose with which the book began; and a plot revolving round the biography of a central character (as in *Nicholas Nickleby, David Copperfield*, etc.) imparts a supple unity to the best novels. In his later work, Dickens endeavoured to brace up this rather lax construction; *Great Expectations* is a novel of a strong and sober texture, which takes a place apart from all the rest.

The profusion of his scenic settings answers to the abundance of his personages. The backgrounds are painted with an ample brush, and the lavishness of details breathes a kind of exhilaration. Description, with Dickens, is more than a means; very often it is an end in itself. It contributes to the general effect, but with such varied and powerful resources at its command that it subordinates the other elements of the narrative to itself. Thus the novel tends to become above all evocative; and imagination, the instrument of realism, carries the search for intense truth right to the domain of purely lyrical vision. The writer's senses are quick and keen; nature, the aspects of concrete life, the picturesqueness of things, eagerly absorbed, are transferred to his work in facile patches, not so much highly coloured as vibrating, astir with a nervous quiver of each contour. The material universe appears as made up of broken lines, pronounced gestures and rapid motions. Supremely suggestive, this art has its limitation in a certain instability, a kind of blinking exaggeration. The rhythm in the succession of images, with Dickens, often shows some slight morbidness.

In his calmer and less feverish spells of work, this gift of infusing with life all that appeals to the senses has the happiest results. He calls up before our eyes scene after scene of a truth made striking, and which yet our feeling of normal life is willing to accept: so accurately is the individual character of things thrown into relief, and so much realistic flavour is mixed up with the eloquence, the moving poetry, or the fanciful drollery, which are the main object and indeed the soul of the picture.

The reason is that the language which has to express both those emotions and those images is naturally rife with them. Dickens is a great writer by virtue of the spontaneity of his verve, and this with a minimum of art. His vocabulary has superabundant wealth; it wells up naturally and easily; all the inherent genius of the English race for concrete perception goes to nourish it. It carries with it, and turns to use, the contents of other veins of speech—learned words, technical terms; but the main inexhaustible stream is drawn from the fund of a racy, national, in no way particularized experience. The refining process of culture is less perceptible here than in the works of many other writers. Dickens, like Carlyle, has his touches of vulgarity—hardly perceptible, at once forgotten under the spell of his delicately generous heart. The highest quality of his style is its movement; a movement at times strained and difficult to follow, but which, in its uninterrupted onward flow, carries on the narration or dialogue without any fear of stagnating inertia. In certain respects the conversations in Dickens's novels are unequalled; the most familiar tones, those of artless comedy or of expressive self-revelation, have in the mouths of his characters a frankness, an appropriateness reaching to perfection. On the other hand, when the situation tends to be artificial, and the verve less spontaneous, an unreal note is immediately perceptible in the dialogue. For the latter has no value in itself; Dickens does not seek to be objective by system and rule; those among his personages who are replete with life have a voice of their own, just as they have an individual physiognomy; the others speak in a somewhat artificial tone, which sounds like a thinly veiled echo of the writer's own voice.

No analysis can grasp the essential originality of such a work; its power of persuasion, which sweeps away our reserves, makes us forgive all the faults of too insistent a method, of a sentimental search for pathos, of an excessive striving after comic effects. Each of these weaknesses is compensated by merits of greater importance. Everything considered, it is due to his talent of sympathy, to his sense of the pitiful tragedy of daily life, and to a rich vein of inventive comedy, that Dickens redeems all his blemishes and keeps his place in the front rank. The *Christmas Carol* is a pretty good example of both his faults and his charm; few have read it without feeling at times annoyed, and much more often won over to the writer's will.

This art has a deep human quality. As its chief instruments are tears and laughter, and above all the poignancy and flavour of their fusion, Dickens is a prominent figure in the lineage of humorists. His humour, that is to say, the temperament of his reaction to the alternate aspects of life, is rich because it is formed of intense elements, his sensibility being keenly alive to the moving significance as well as to the odd nature of things. But this alone would not constitute humour, if it did not contain a principle of self-control, the faculty to dominate and to mix, according to the preferences of an intuitive art, the successive complementary impulses of his being. As a humorist, Dickens is amenable to discipline, to a psychological duality, one side of his mind watching the other. It is due to the presence of this salutary element that his art, threatened in other respects with a too definite Romanticism, acquires restraint, dignity, and the complexity of manifold planes, which, otherwise, it might have lacked.

Among the English novelists Dickens is neither the most consummate artist, nor the finest psychologist, nor the most accomplished realist, nor the most seductive of tale writers; but he is, probably, the most national, the most typical, and the greatest of them all.

In his own sphere, there is none in his time who can approach him. The novel of social inspiration, however, attracts the talents of original writers; from 1840 to 1850 this kind engrosses most of the vitality of English fiction.

(*b*) DISRAELI, MRS. GASKELL, KINGSLEY, THE BRONTËS.—Although indebted to his father for certain precious advantages in the struggle for success to which he consecrated his career, Disraeli[1] can well be described as the sole maker of his own fame. He disarmed racial prejudice; and in the nation where the pride of aristocratic birth had remained most strongly rooted, this Jew—for such he was—although only separated by a generation from his foreign origin, as leader of the Conservative party came to impose his authority on the descendants of the most ancient English families. Such an extraordinary destiny as his represents the triumph of personality. Never has the writer, or the politician, been more decidedly inseparable from the man.

The most prominent feature with Disraeli is perhaps the suppleness of his nature. Thanks to a clearer faculty of perception, sharpened again by a more conscious apprenticeship, he singled out and definitely grasped the faculty of silent adaptation which was the core of English tradition; he mastered it, and, while assimilating, he deepened it; he rediscovered the claims of political empiricism, and, taking up the heritage of Burke's doctrine, appeared as his successor. But he could not have so efficiently continued it, unless his temperament had been attuned to it. His oriental sense of craftiness and opportunism infused a genuine sincerity into his communion with the ancient wisdom of the British instinct. And his imagination naturally clothed that wisdom with grandeur and with poetry. He could exalt the prestige of the monarchy and the pomp of the Empire, because he was deeply aware that the world is ruled by imagery; and because this England, which held the East in sway, took his mind back to the very cradle of his thought.

One must not charge him, therefore, with those semi-deceits by which the utilitarian sense of a thinker decides his beliefs. One must not even trace the copiousness, the variety of his work, the conscious effects of his style, exclusively to literary artifice. He has written in accordance with the law of his being. But there remains in the exuberance or the fluency of his language something which betrays too great a command of verbal ingenuity, the somewhat showy display of a national quality of little depth; a lustre on blossom and fruit through which another sap reveals itself, below the discipline of grafting and cultivation. And if with him conviction is not easily distinguishable from paradox, it is possibly because his versatile mind had often passed from the one to the other, and had not any direct or exact sense of their difference.

His first novels are the tentative experiments, spirited, witty, cynical, or sometimes sentimental and conventional, of a talent in quest of its true vein. All the influences of his time are combined in them, together with a remarkable intuition of the future. The traces of Romanticism are still to be found; history furnishes the framework of more than one story; the picture of fashionable life gives itself ample scope, whether in a spirit of complacency, or of liveliness and satire. To these already familiar elements are added more original themes, political allusions and discussions; and one book, at least, testifies to a mind open to the entirely new attraction of German literature (*Contarini Fleming*). Below this surface of dilettantism, however, one can discern in all his writings the earnestness of an intellectual ambition; and an active interest in the realities of human existence, which must, some day, come to grips with the present-day problems of life. Disraeli is searching for a faith; and already in more than one pamphlet he sketches out the doctrine of national regeneration which is shaping itself in his mind (*Vindication of the English Constitution,* etc.).

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[1] Benjamin Disraeli, grandson of a Venetian Jew who had settled in England, and the son of a distinguished man of letters whose fortune brought him into contact with the aristocracy, was born in London in 1804; educated privately, he planned, while yet very young, a programme of political and literary ambition. He published several novels: *Vivian Grey* (1826), *The Young Duke* (1831), *Contarini Fleming* (1832), *The Wondrous Tale of Alroy* (1833), *Henrietta Temple* (1837), *Venetia* (1837); satires and parodies: *Captain Popanilla* (1828), *The Infernal Marriage* (1834), etc.; after several reverses he succeeded in entering Parliament in 1837, supplied the "Young England" party with a doctrine, which he preached in three novels, *Coningsby* (1844), *Sybil* (1845), *Tancred* (1847); leader of the Opposition against Peel, he became Minister in 1852; grouping round him the Conservative party, he carried through the Reform Act of 1867, and as Prime Minister directed English politics (Congress of Berlin, 1878). Created Lord Beaconsfield, he died in 1881. His writings include two further novels, *Lothair* (1870) and *Endymion* (1880); a biography, *Lord George Bentinck* (1852); a political pamphlet, *Vindication of the English Constitution* (1835), etc. *Selected Speeches*, ed. by Kebbel, 1882. *Novels and Tales*, 11 vols., 1881. See biography by Monypenny and Buckle 1910–20; studies by Brandes, 1877 (English ed., 1880); Froude, 1890; Kebbel, 1888; Whibley, 1900; Cromer, 1912.

After 1840, the interest taken by writers in social problems is stimulated by the consciousness that a decisive crisis is at hand, and that an unbearable degree of poverty is endangering public order; the novel with a purpose becomes more daring, and quite openly grapples with the fundamental problems at issue. This is the literary medium chosen by Disraeli to disseminate the ideas of a programme which he has now definitely drawn up, that of "Young England." *Coningsby* and *Sybil* in succession explain its political and economic sides. The cause of the trouble is the individualism of a society where all the organic bonds which used to support the national unity are now broken. A Whig aristocracy, egoistic and devoid of any traditional sentiment; an energetic middle class, solely absorbed in the pursuit of wealth; men of reason, cold-blooded sophists, deceiving theorists, the economists, the Utilitarians, have destroyed the vital harmony which imparted its health to the British body politic. They have divided class from class, individual from individual. Left to itself, industry has crushed beneath its unyielding mechanism a defenceless humanity; and the natural forces of counter-action which ought to have imposed a limit to its unchecked play—the authority of the sovereign, the public spirit of a nobility rooted on the soil—both failed at the hour of need. What is required is that in religion, obedience, charity, in the generous emotions of veneration and respect, there should be revived again the system of feudal equality among vassals before their suzerain, the mediæval liberty of the subject in his relation to his prince and his father. The Church, endowed with the spiritual power, will play her part in this general accord, which will re-establish justice through love. The lot of the peasant will be happy, if the castle watches over the interests of the cottage; the factory, that new, unstable force, will integrate itself in the order which it has long been disturbing, as soon as its proper place within it is recognized, and instead of upsetting will thenceforth vitalize it; and presiding over a salutary hierarchy of rights, all of which will be justified by correlative duties, the Church and the Throne will jointly exercise a vigilant control over all souls. This gospel, which owes much to the teaching of Carlyle, ends in a kind of fanciful mysticism; *Tancred* quite openly holds out to the troubled, diseased West the vision of the land where the source of inspiration never runs dry, the Holy East, and the Asia of the Prophets.

Disraeli was never again to write anything of so rich a substance, or of a significance that would remain so fresh. Those books, saturated with didactic intentions, soaked through and through with self-interested motives, are artistically of most unequal merit. Their very realism, often solid as it is and based on documents, derives an unreal colouring from the fanciful elements with which it is mixed; the characters have hardly any other life than what they may owe to the symbolism of their actions, or to the meaning of their words; the plots are strange, and yet not unforeseen; an ardour, an animation of mind and verve are constantly rising almost to eloquence and pathos, without ever reaching them. But the forcefulness of the imagination calls up pictures of impressive breadth and colouring; the intellectual display is dazzling; the descriptions of life and manners, although artificial when invented or merely deduced, are strikingly true when the writer draws from his store of familiar observation. And the political intelligence which analyzes the troubles of the century shows remarkable penetration. Disraeli has foreseen all the successive forms of modern imperialism; he has deduced all the consequences of an anti-rational principle in politics, and more thoroughly than Burke, has laid down the laws of a government of men founded on illusion and instinct.

The quiet but attractive originality of Mrs. Gaskell[1] among the social novelists of her time, lies in her combining, better than any other, a manifest purpose with a descriptive realism that knows how to remain supple and free. Her teaching is entirely spontaneous; it voices the immediate reaction of a sensibility in contact with the facts; the range of her books is none other than that of her personal experience; and as she never ventures beyond what she knows intimately, her pictures are true at the same time as they are eloquent. When she portrays industrial conflicts (as in *Mary Barton*), or the contrast between the kindly civilization of the agricultural South, and the keen individualism of the North, with its feverish absorption in the progress of machinery (*North and South*), her pages have a virtue of human persuasion, and played a prominent part among the most active suggestions making for the solidarity which was from that time gradually recognized. Although her didactic purpose did not go beyond the duty of charity and mutual sympathy, she thus stressed the psychological—or the deepest—aspects of the reaction, already begun, against the dogma of economic egoism. But the value of her art is enhanced by its just and finely tempered quality. The manners, the characters, the language of her heroes, whether they are employers, or Churchmen, or belong to the labouring class as land or manual workers, are of an order of truth still slightly idealized, but based on concrete observation, and quite close to the view of reality which one can expect from a woman's frank, tender and yet penetrating glance.

The same delicately tempered perception, the same tactful handling of the finer shades of expression, also give their value to the works where her realism, escaping the riddle of social problems, devotes itself to the study of personality and environment for the sake of their picturesque variety only. Her attempts at coping with dramatic situations, or her explicit defence of some cause, as her plea against the stigma that attaches to a seduced woman (*Ruth*), are not equally felicitous; it is here, perhaps, that her art finds its limitation; or at least, that the taste of many readers has fixed it. On the contrary, the scenes and episodes of provincial life which she has set and grouped in the trim frame of a quiet little town, stirred only by the hundred and one petty concerns of sentiment and pride, are dear to all English hearts (*Cranford*). This delightful mingling of sly satire, humour and emotion gave George Eliot the model for her first tales; it reminds one of Jane Austen, in a manner less brilliant and vigorous, but with greater tenderness of charm. Through her work as a whole, Mrs. Gaskell deserves to be ranked among the representatives of psychological realism; she has there a place by herself; for if she does not penetrate very deep, and scarcely probes for the abnormal regions of consciousness, she moves within the average expanses of the inner world with remarkable ease and sureness.

[1] Elizabeth Cleghorn Stevenson, born at Chelsea in 1810, married in 1832 the Rev. W. Gaskell, a Unitarian minister of Manchester, and studied the industrial life of that city. After several excursions in literature, she drew from her experience the matter for a novel, *Mary Barton* (1848); published anonymously, the work had a great success. She collaborated with Dickens in his reviews (*Household Words*, etc.), to which she contributed short stories and a novel of provincial life, *Cranford* (1853); returned to the problem novel in *Ruth* (1853) and *North and South* (1855). Her last works were of a different character: *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (1857), *Sylvia's Lovers* (1863), *Wives and Daughters* (incomplete; 1866–67). She died in 1866. Her short stories form several volumes in the collection of her complete works (Knutsford ed., ed. by A. W. Ward, 1906). See Montégut, *Ecriv. mod. d'Angleterre*, 1899; Ward, Introduction to the Knutsford ed., 1906; Cazamian, *Roman social*, 1903; M. A. Bald, *Women Writers of the XIXth Century*, 1923.

Charles Kingsley[1] is one of those romantic temperaments, such as are to be found throughout the century, in which the original ardour is at once nourished and sobered by turning to another object than the lyrical expression of the self. In his zeal as a young clergyman, determined to live up to the standard of his faith, he felt bound to bring his active will to bear on a world in which poverty scandalizes every good heart, and where the increase of infidelity is a token of the spreading empire of selfishness. Romanticism, in thus becoming emancipated from the morbid obsession of self, and developing a more social outlook, gives evidence of its growing desire for a renewed and fresher life, the source of which is its objective interest in things as they are; it is half-way on the road to impersonal literature; but while it reveals after its fashion the taste for balance, it still retains at heart its secret fever, and never succeeds in reaching a state of serenity. Whereas a Tennyson disciplines his passion and curbs it to a search after perfect form, Kingsley with his facile but uncertain talent, his inability to realize the exact task of the artist only succeeds in producing second-rate work in the various branches of literature, towards which his disquietude of temperament prompts him to turn.

He has none the less given its most eloquent appeal to the social novel. *Yeast* and above all *Alton Locke* have lost nothing of the ardour of their revolt against the moral crime of indifference. These books possess the rare privilege, in the literature written by authors who are not actually social rebels, of genuinely expressing the bitter sentiment of injustice which is born of personal experience. They have thus imparted to thousands of readers something of the generosity of "Christian Socialism." This doctrine, in its English form, gathers and reconciles the various influences at work in those agitated years, when the spirit of democracy was fermenting, still in open opposition to the absolute régimes in force; the years when the hope of a juster order sprang from the climax of intolerable conditions in industry. The preaching of Kingsley is based upon the ideas of Carlyle. His theology is dependent upon that of Maurice[2] who taught that the Saviour's sacrifice having redeemed the flesh as well as the spirit, the scope of charity should not stop short of our neighbours' bodily welfare. The life of Kingsley had brought him into contact with poverty both in rural districts and in towns, but he was ignorant of the new meaning placed upon the word by the advent of machinery and concentrated production. His ideas apply only to the needs of the small workshop. To the French Co-operators he owes the principle of an active fraternity without which, he thinks, no society can continue to exist.

These themes are fully brought out in his two novels, where they are intermingled with scenes from life and pictures of manners, painted with a broad and strong, though hasty touch. In choosing the framework of the stories

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[1] Charles Kingsley, born in 1819 in the southwest of England, was the son of a cleric; studied at Cambridge, took orders and passed the greater part of his life as Anglican minister in the rural parish of Eversley, in Hampshire. He wrote a dramatic poem, *The Saint's Tragedy* (1848); formed with Maurice, Ludlow, etc., a group of theorists whose study was social progress and who became known as "Christian Socialists"; took part in the crusade for better sanitation (1848–51), and in the working-men's co-operative movement. He preached his ideas in two novels (*Yeast*, 1848; *Alton Locke*, 1850), and compiled numerous pamphlets or articles in *The Christian Socialist* and *Politics for the People.* He then turned his attention to other subjects, wrote poems and novels: *Hypatia* (1853), *Westward Ho!* (1855), *Two Years Ago* (1866); was appointed to the Professorship of History at Cambridge (1860–69), published a further series of imaginative works, such as *The Water Babies* (1863); died in 1875, leaving behind many sermons, essays, controversial treatises, etc. *Life and Works*, 19 vols., 1901–3; *Poems*, new ed., 1889. See biography and letters in the opening pages of *Life and Works;* studies by Harrison (*Kingsley's Place in Literature*), 1895; Kaufmann (*Charles Kingsley, Christian Socialist*), 1892; Marriott (*Charles Kingsley, Novelist*), 1892; Stubb (*Charles Kingsley and Christian Social Movement*), 1899; Cazamian (*Roman social*), 1903.

[2] See above, chap. ii. sect. 4.

Kingsley does not depart from the traditional rules of precedence; despite his rather bitter radicalism, he shows respect for established moral authorities: that of the nobility, if it does not shirk its duties; that of the clergy, if it rises to the height of its task. Where he touches upon new ground is in those pages in which he fearlessly sets out to describe the decaying state of the country districts, the dark ignorance which enshrouds the Puritan lower middle class of the towns, the painful ugliness of the slums, the contagious vice, lawlessness and disease which radiate from them and are a menace to the happy and the rich; the slavery of the workers whom the sweater fattens upon. The destiny of Alton Locke, whose development was hindered by the inferiority of his birth, symbolizes the cruellest aspect of social evil, the unequal chances of culture and full human development offered to the various classes.

The realism of Kingsley is pervaded by a powerful sensibility. Like that of Dickens, it does not seek a finely shaded truth, but soothes itself by extracting from all objects the silent meaning which lies beneath the surface, and which is tacitly repressed by convention. He wants to open our eyes, to make us feel; and the too forceful pressure thus exerted is the cause of the resistance which his interpretation of life, despite its vigour, ultimately awakens in the reader. The characters themselves are also the embodiment of demonstrative intentions, and are for the most part rather flimsily constructed. The lyricism on the other hand, whether it develops social themes and rouses the fear of smouldering rebellion, or pours itself forth with greater freedom in the joy of nature, of energy and of effort, has a sincere and attractive quality. In Kingsley we have a poet (he has composed verses of excellent rhythm and lilt), and a seer. He is more able to rise to heights of impassioned ardour, than he can show acuteness, depth or psychological penetration. However, he has a gift of humour, and to it he owes the happiest parts of his works.

After the years of his struggles, he lived to be a quiet man and an optimist. His imagination, still dominant, now gives itself play in calling up historical or legendary scenes; he still weights his novels with theses, but they deal now with less urgent and burning problems. What he seeks more than anything else in these last works is dramatic or epic effects. At the same time the natural sciences—the treasures of the animal and vegetable worlds—still stir to enthusiasm his soul athirst for wonder.

In the work of Charlotte Brontë[1] it is again Romanticism which is the animating force, but a Romanticism of individual passion, similar to that of the previous generation. The novelty in the present case lies in the quality of the soul which thus shares its deeper secrets with the reader; and one might also trace it to the fact of the author being a woman. The femininity of the writer explains the delicacy which intermingles with the ardour of sentiment in her studies of love, and the subtle essence of originality which is diffused through the substance of the emotions, and the very outlook upon life. The pure and yet outspoken confessions contained in her pages inaugurate in England that free revelation of sentiment, which for three-quarters of a century is to be the special contribution of feminine literature to our knowledge of the heart.

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[1] Charlotte Brontë, the daughter of a curate of Irish extraction, was born at Bradford in 1816 and passed her youth in the industrial village of Haworth in Yorkshire, in the midst of a bleak countryside. Intellectually precocious like her sisters, she wrote short stories and verses while yet in her school days; became a teacher, studied French in Brussels in the school of M. Héger, and formed a deep and romantic attachment for her tutor. This experience supplied her with the material for her first novel, *The Professor* (a posthumous publication in 1857). *Jane Eyre* (1847), which appeared under the pseudonym of Currer Bell, had a great success; in 1849 was published *Shirley*, and in 1853, *Villette* in the authoress's own name. Her life, which had been spent within the family circle, and had been overcast with much grief, found a short, happy respite in her marriage with Mr. Nicholls (1854). She died in 1855. In collaboration with her sisters she published the collection of *Poems* (1846), and left behind fragments, etc. Her sister Emily Jane (1814–48), a lonely, mysterious soul, died in her thirtieth year, shortly after the publication of a novel, *Wuthering Heights* (1847). *Complete Works of Charlotte Brontë and Her Sisters*, 1905; *Complete Works of Emily Brontë*, ed. by Shorter, 1910; *Complete Poems of Charlotte Brontë;* idem *of Emily Brontë*, ed. by Shorter, etc., 1923. See the biographies by Mrs. Gaskell, 1857; Birrell (Great Writers), 1887; Shorter (*The Brontës, Life and Letters*), 1908; studies by Montégut (*Ecr. mod. d'Angl. i.*), 1885; Dimnet (*Les Sœurs Brontë*), 1910; M. A. Bald (*Women Writers of the XIXth Century*), 1923.

Passion, as we have it in the novels of Charlotte Brontë, is transfused through and through with the moral austerity of a strong religious up-bringing; it is coloured by a stoicism yet sore from an experience in which hardly more than the painful side of human affection has been revealed. Under the stern discipline of such a trial, Charlotte Brontë turned instinctively and spontaneously to a self-expression that revealed her, no doubt, and the reserve of which restrained her effusiveness without checking it; but free from mere display, shorn of all ornament, and limited to a kind of sober realism. At the instance of the publishers, and in order to satisfy public taste, there were added certain dramatic elements of a somewhat artificial and morbid kind, to which *Jane Eyre* owes its least felicitous features, though not the least characteristic.

The other novels, less influenced by the search for violent emotions, develop round one central theme—the magnetism which subjugates the force of tenderness, be it humble or proud, in the love of woman, to the commanding radiance of a manly personality. This inevitable theme, in which we touch upon the secret of Charlotte Brontë's own life, leaves room for deft psychological analyses and shrewd descriptions. Pictures of everyday life, even scenes from social history—a school in Brussels towards 1840, Yorkshire at the time of the Luddite riots—add a concrete interest to *Villette* or *Shirley*. The spirit of these episodes is not always without its stings; Charlotte Brontë can handle irony at will; her satirical picture of society on the Continent is not free from some insular stiffness. Yet when all is said, these works with their restlessness are replete with a kind of sly fancy, a pleasing sprightliness of mind; but even the charm of their piquant observation is overshadowed by the great wave of impassioned lyricism which from time to time sweeps through their pages. The tumults of feverish, agitated or smothered feeling give them a throb of secret life and their appeal to our sympathies; just as an exalted eloquence, an enraptured imagination impart its most poetical quality to the prose of *Shirley*. But the same cannot be said of other parts of her work, where the language is more laboured, more timid than really artistic; it is clogged by incessant references to the abstract, and by a kind of persistent generalizing. Her style is seen at its best when it has the courage to remain simple, and allows itself to be moulded by its own pure inspiration.

With the younger sister of Charlotte, Emily Brontë, we come upon a talent of stranger and perhaps rarer quality, whose first works are all we have before her premature death. There is no one after 1830 who so completely and boldly realizes the ideal of independence in thought, and freedom in spiritual life, which the emancipation of Romanticism had set forth. In the cruel seclusion to which Fate and misfortune condemned her, she escapes from the trammels of daily life, and out of her solitary musings, in the heart of the wild moors, makes up the inner world of her mystic maidenhood. Her verse half reveals a conscious paganism, the revenge of pantheistic intuitions against the combined tyranny of society, family and religion. Only in the sad and rough, but pure and beautiful realms of Nature, did she find true consolation. Her powerful novel, *Wuthering Heights*, where, unfortunately, it is impossible to reckon the exact contribution of her sister and her brother, is the work of an instinctive genius, that can divine the emotions of the most passionate souls. The figures which she has fashioned from the fabric of her dreams are worked out in wonderful relief, as if they had been borrowed from the most intimately known substance of reality. Her psychology, as naïve as it is profound, is at the same time wholly imaginary, and astonishingly convincing.

4. Newman and the Oxford Movement.—It would be out of place here to sum up the history of the Oxford Movement. Its moral causes, its deeper significance, its connection with the whole of the Idealistic reaction, are all that we need to emphasize. The birth of the movement can be traced to an inner decision, whereby a certain temperament of soul sets up its particular needs and its preferences as the guiding principle of its spiritual beliefs. The type of mind that had been seeking its literary satisfaction in imaginative or mystical Romanticism, in the resuscitation of a mediæval past, in the return to national traditions, in the cult of emotions and forms which time had consecrated and exalted, would naturally find it impossible to live in the atmosphere of a cold, critical, dry religion, without feeling it acutely. After the Methodists and the Evangelicals had won over as many converts as possible from among the common run of lukewarm believers, the Anglican Church as a whole was still steeped in the torpor of the eighteenth century; at the same time the increasingly bolder attacks of free discussion were a menace to dogmatic tenets, whose holders seemed to have lost the courage to defend them. Political liberalism, with its patent hostility against the principle of the establishment and the privileges of the clergy, and rationalism in religion, a spirit stirred to activity by the German exponents of the higher criticism, were the perils which prompted new apostles to rise at Oxford. Their uprise was a direct consequence, through their stubborn opposition, of the progress of intellectualism, and of all the forces which were imprinting the stamp of a common-sense wisdom upon the incipient Victorian order. Their fervent enthusiasm is the beacon light of their endeavour. They have come, they say, to rejuvenate religion in the name of the Church, the centre of a spiritual radiance which is beyond all human guess.

Thus the Oxford movement is one among the several streams of fervid philosophical or social thought which run through the dry, uninspiring expanse of that industrial age, and fertilize it. Its course is parallel with that of other streams, and it sometimes mixes with them. But it preserves its separate identity. Superficial differences often hide very positive analogies. The idealism of Carlyle, for example, does not recognize its kinship with that of Newman. Among the great social novelists, Disraeli is the only one who feels openly sympathetic with an apology for religious worship in all its pomp. Ruskin declares himself violently opposed to the Tractarians. Unlike other revivals of the past, that of the nineteenth century keeps a rather particularist and confined character; it does not penetrate to any great extent the psychological life of the day, nor does it colour the literature. But its subtle and distant influence can be felt at many points of the intellectual horizon, although one cannot often precisely distinguish what is due to it, and what is the outcome of neighbouring tendencies outside its range. Pre-Raphaelitism and the æsthetic renascence are sometimes working in conjunction with it; William Morris while at Oxford is an ardent Tractarian; Tennyson's poetry also is not without offering some trace of the attraction which the movement exerted over the imagination of the time. Novels such as those of Miss Yonge[1] and, later, of Shorthouse[2] reflect it to the full. And the most outstanding personality of the movement, both by virtue of his vigour of thought and by the quality of his expression, belongs undoubtedly to the literary history of those years.

With Newman[3] personality counts for everything. It envelops and contains the mystery of a decision upon which he centred his whole moral life. It is also the force which could make public opinion, in a people still susceptible of religious passion, tolerate an open defiance to old and stubborn prejudices. It exercised during his lifetime a charm, the spell of which his pages have not yet lost. It remains the very soul of his work.

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[1] 1823–1901: *The Heir of Redclyffe,* 1853.

[2] 1834–1903: *John Inglesant,* 1881. See Book VII. chap. iii. sect. 2.

[3] John Henry Newman, born in London in 1801, son of a banker and of a mother of French descent, studied at Oxford, took orders, wrote religious poems (*Lyra Apostolica,*

Nothing is more deceitful than the illusory perspective created by the famous conversion of Newman, and the abnormal, dramatic colouring with which popular imagination at once invested his person. A pronouncedly individual being, gifted with exceptional suppleness and intellectual sharpness, Newman is still upon the whole decidedly English. He possesses in the highest degree qualities which, undoubtedly, are not the most common to his race, but with which many others before him were also endowed; he does not, again, show certain traits very frequently recognizable in the modern British character, but which are not the most essential; yet his nature as a whole conforms to the general type. Below the grace and the delicate changeful shades, one feels the robust make of his character. His dialectic nimbleness, his shrewdness and at the same time his ardour, the simple self-effusion which so intimately mixes up his personality with his ideas, had all belonged to the English mind at the time of its Elizabethan youth; this temperament had been hardened, narrowed, bound with conventions and reserves, by the stress of social discipline, and under the withering influence of a degenerate classicism. Just as the Romanticists had infused new life into literature by going back to fountain-heads of national tradition and feeling, so the theologians of the Oxford movement refreshed religious life by a return to a vitality stored in the past. This was exactly what the Methodists had done in their sphere. But the reform introduced by Newman and Pusey is different; it is more refined, more intellectual, more academic, and its scope is more widely human. As a man of free intelligence and keen sensibility, Newman traverses a kind of moral drama which as it enacts itself stage by stage, in a conscience such as his, untrammelled by any secondary preoccupation, comes to have a very general significance and bearing. The emotion which that drama stirred in the public mind was due to a widespread realization that a first-rate thinker had investigated, as far as was humanly possible, a problem of universal importance, and had put forward a solution at once courageous and frank.

Newman devoted several works to the definite support of this solution. First of all, he takes his standpoint on the ground of history; like so many of his compatriots, he is respectful of the claims of tradition. After having endeavoured to justify the Anglican compromise by representing it as a judicious mean between extreme errors, he must surrender to what becomes for him an urgent truth: that the continuity of Ordination claimed by the Church of England is not valid; and that with the Roman Catholic clergy alone lies the pres-

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1834), and played an important part from the beginning in the movement which shook his University. He contributed twenty of the ninety *Tracts for the Times* (1840–41); resigned his position in the Anglican Church (1843), and became a convert to Roman Catholicism (1845). His *Sermons*, preached at Oxford, had been published in 1843; he published after his conversion, *Sermons Addressed to Mixed Congregations*, 1849, and *Sermons on Various Occasions*, 1857, etc.; psychological or historical novels: *Loss and Gain*, 1848; *Callista*, 1856; doctrinal or polemical works: *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, 1843; *Lectures on Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans*, 1850; *The Present Position of Catholics in England*, 1851; *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, 1864; *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, 1870; poems: *The Dream of Gerontius*, 1866; *Verses on Various Occasions*, 1868; critical and historical essays, etc. Raised to the cardinalate in 1870, he died in 1890. *Works*, 36 vols., 1868–81; *Letters . . . during His Life in the English Church*, ed. by Mozley, 1891. See the biographies or studies by Barry, 1904; Brémond, 1906; Delattre (*La Pensée de Newman*), 1919; Grappe, 1902; Dimnet, 1906; Meynell (*Cardinal Newman*), 1907; Thureau-Dangin (*La Renaissance catholique en Angleterre*), 1912; Waller and Burrow, 1906; Ward (*Life of Newman*), 1912. *Apologia*, ed. by Ward, 1913.

ervation and the transmission of this privilege of the Apostles. Henceforward he submits to the discipline of Rome, reconciling obedience and humility with a moral independence which remains the stamp of his origin; he does not, therefore, find a peace unalloyed with bitterness in his new creed; the needs of his nature do not harmonize easily with the atmosphere of a strange world, and his activities meet with many obstacles. He seeks consolation in writing lives of saints, or genuine novels, in which the fight which he had had to wage is told under the guise of fiction; or in directing attacks against the critical principle of Protestantism.

But the original contribution of his thought is a theory of religious belief. Already, when studying the development of the Christian doctrine, shortly before his conversion, he had brought forward a more organic idea of dogma than was current in his time. In his *Grammar of Assent* he propounds with much cogency, at a date when logical intellectualism is still in the ascendant, an intuitive notion of the inner reactions which prepare the way for belief: a delicate perception of numberless incommunicable shades, the valuation of which remains entirely subjective, and induces the heart to signify its assent, without any intervention of judgment in its well-defined modes. It was not by a blind instinct that Newman in the earliest stage of his career had been the adversary of "liberalism." Through the general weight and trend of all his work, he takes his place at the very centre of that reaction against the purely rational attitude of mind, which as early as the middle years of the century was opening the way for the new Mysticism of its last decades.

The psychologist in Newman is inseparable from the moralist and the preacher. It is his insight into consciousness that allows him either to throw light upon character, or to create persuasion. He has a delicate, almost feminine sense of the emotional undulations which accompany the clear-cut outline of an idea; this tact, which imparts their efficient quality to his fervour or his pathos, gives their value to his analyses, and the force of authority to his every word. The association of all these gifts explains the singular interest of his *Apologia*, the most widely read of his works; that confession in which the moving sincerity of the tone, and the reserve in the revelation of self, are welded into such a finely tempered whole.

The diction of Newman has strength, elegance and suppleness. He knows how to use irony, and his eloquence is by no means restricted in range; a brilliant polemist, capable of driving a nervous and pressing offensive, he shows a preference for the warm oratorical style; though his rhetoric never appears artificial, because of the ardour which sustains the spontaneous elevation of the language. His thought naturally moves at a quick, animated gait; he excels in explaining the conflicts of the heart or the most subtle theological discussions with nobility as well as with clearness. During the nineteenth century there has been no one in England, among believers, who has given so human a touch to the technicalities of religious problems, or made them more accessible to all.

Newman sums up in himself the literary brilliance of the Oxford movement. The other converts are somewhat lost in his radiant fame.[1] When the cleavage took place between the two unequal groups of thinkers—on one hand those who, in their disquietude of mind and eagerness for thoroughgoing beliefs, pushed their principles to the logical end, and followed them even into the fold of Roman Catholicism; on the other the advocates of compromise, who remained faithful to their Church, and brought influence to bear upon Anglicanism from within—it was clear that this outburst of zeal, and exaltation of religion, was really not so very different, in nature or in result, from those which previous centuries had witnessed. The Ritualist movement gradually renewed the ways of worship, and stimulated religious feeling, even in social circles very far removed from its original centre. In this respect its action must be regarded as a component force in the Neo-Romantic movement which develops after 1870, one element of which was to be a renascence of religious fervour, while another would inversely be the spread of moral anguish and of the suffering born of unbelief.

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[1] John Keble (1792–1866), a cleric, poet, theologian, inaugurated the Oxford movement in 1833 by a sermon on "National Apostasy." He published in 1827 a collection of religious verse, *The Christian Year.* Edward Bouverie Pusey (1800–82) was the outstanding figure among the Anglican ritualists. William George Ward (1812–82) wrote *The Ideal of a Christian Church* (1844), and followed Newman in his conversion. Of the other Tractarians, the most noteworthy are Richard Hurrell Froude (1803–36), Frederick Oakeley (1802–80), and Isaac Williams (1802–65).

5. **The Æsthetic Revival: Ruskin.**—As soon as the new features of the Victorian age had fully developed, a revolt against ugliness grew to a head and found expression, in unison with the grievances of moral idealism, of humanitarian sensibility and of faith. The industrial age had founded itself on the cult of quantity. In the resulting civilization, the religion of pure quality had no place. The craving for the beautiful in daily life was no less generally or cruelly thwarted than were the need of an inner nobleness or the longing for a heart at peace. No doubt, art and literature were honoured. But as measured by the scale of uncompromising instincts, the respect shown them was superficial, insincere or vain. For this respect did not permeate the whole of life; it was of no avail against the scandal, daily growing worse, of such vulgarity in the physical and intellectual character of things, of such starved expression on the surface of social life and the spiritual aspect of souls, that the artist's gaze would meet only with distressing sights, and he would find himself deprived of his indispensable nourishment.

Æsthetically considered, the features of society had always been mediocre; but this mediocrity was now set off and made worse by the material progress which was multiplying man's resources, and encouraging his hopes in every direction. In some respects even, it was not sufficient to say that the world was not becoming more beautiful, according to what seemed the fair expectation of a rational age; the fact had to be recognized that it was becoming uglier. The beauty of nature was being destroyed, and humanity degraded, by industry on a large scale. Stimulated by that painful experience, the desire for a better life assumed the form of a regret; and all the beauty which the present was lacking shed its glory, by a natural reaction, over the past.

Romanticism had already known this impassioned return of imagination towards bygone ages. The artistic revival, no less closely than the other aspects of the Idealistic movement, is bound up with the Romantic inspiration, which to all intents was now becoming a spent force in the literary field, but whose secret energy was continuing and prolonging itself. After the supple, fresh, poetic realism of Constable's landscapes, we must wait until after 1830 for the great riots of light and colour where the brush of Turner reveals the passion of his impressionist and even symbolist art; and painting, as in its turn, but at a later date, it passes through the very same phases as poetry, thus finds its Shelley after its Wordsworth. In their æsthetic theory and their deliberate worship of the beautiful, both Pre-Raphaelitism and the gospel of Ruskin are the vigorous offshoots of Romanticism, whose sap is their vitalizing element.

But this sap had in itself the power of fertilizing different germs, and the two branches of the movement underwent different growths. The beautiful may be chiefly perceived by us as a sensuous appeal, or as a call to our faculty of worship. According to the various temperaments and circumstances, the cult of art will tend towards a detached self-sufficing sensuality, or a spiritual religion. English literature from 1800 to 1830 had already illustrated these neighbouring tendencies, which are indeed so intimately bound up one with the other as to render separation scarcely possible. The work of Keats in its entirety breathes a rapture of the senses, a transport of soul, that finds its full satisfaction in the voluptuousness of nature, or in the entrancing imaginative aspects of the human world. That rapture had fed on the past of history or of legend. In the themes of antiquity or of the Middle Ages there was a very special force of suggestion; the modes of a former life were idealized by their very remoteness; they were looked upon as possessing either an incomparable wealth of beauty, or an attractive and picturesque simplicity, which one of refined taste must relish even more, because he would thus feel the supreme pleasure of obtaining partly through himself, and through his own effort, a gratification the more enjoyable for being more largely self-created.

The æstheticism of Keats had been a first sketch of what, one generation later, became Pre-Raphaelitism. This doctrine bears the stamp of a more intellectual period, when art, more conscious of itself, works by principle, and will load its effects with subtle intentions. In it the rationalist atmosphere of the Victorian era pervades even the efforts of Sensibility and Imagination to escape from the tyranny of a Reason which had become too positive. Compared with the broad current of Romanticism, Pre-Raphaelitism thus seems to be little more than an impoverished stream, receding farther and farther from the fountain-heads of inspiration, and wasting itself in the sands of artifice or preciosity. It tends to condense, particularize and limit what was already the passionate quest of the Beautiful in its more intense forms, with a clearly marked preference for the archaic and the pure. It is a sect, and has its initiated adepts. The cardinal desire which animates it is frankly aimed at the past; it centres round the imitation of a certain spirit, as represented by a school of early painters. Its main focus is in the revival of art; but it exercises a very direct and close influence on literature. It allows one ideal to radiate through methods of expression similar though different. Its disciples find their leader in Dante Gabriel Rossetti, a painter and a poet. It is when dealing with poetry that the historian of literature must study Pre-Raphaelitism.[1]

To pass from this doctrine to the teaching of Ruskin[2] is to enter into a very different sphere of thought, in spite of many identical tenets and a margin of common sympathies. It is the Romanticism of the mystics and the moralists that revives here, not that of the lovers to whom sensual beauty means everything; it is the tradition of Blake and Wordsworth, not that of Keats. And just as English Romanticism had been much more a spiritual religion than a merely sensuous intoxication, so the work of Ruskin is more robust and more broadly significant than that of his contemporaries, the Pre-Raphaelites; it draws its inspiration from deeper currents of British thought; it better expresses the permanent needs of its idealism.

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[1] See further, chap. iv. sect. 4.

[2] John Ruskin, born in 1819 in London, the son of a merchant of Scottish extraction, was educated at home and then studied at Oxford, journeying on several occasions to the Continent. A lover of art and of the painting of Turner, he wrote to justify his tastes, and gradually built up a whole system of æsthetics: *Modern Painters*, etc., 5 vols., 1843–60; *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 1849; *The Stones of Venice*, 1851–53; *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, 1853; *Pre-Raphaelitism*, 1851. In *The Political Economy of Art*, 1857, and *The Two Paths*, 1859, his thought tends towards problems of a social order, which he openly discusses in *Unto This Last*, 1862, a book which ranks him among the intellectual rebels. An ardent critic of modern civilization and the prophet of a spirit of regeneration, he published: *Munera Pulveris*, 1862; *Sesame and Lilies*, 1865 (published as a volume, 1872); *Ethics of the Dust*, 1866; *The Crown of Wild Olive*, 1866; *Time and Tide*, 1888. Elected Professor of Art at Oxford (1869–78 and from 1883 to 1884), he wrote a series of familiar letters for the artisan classes in England (*Fors Clavigera*, 1871–87); besides numerous essays, lectures, etc., he undertook an autobiography (*Praeterita*, unfinished, 1885–1900), and died in 1900. *Works*, ed. by Cook and Wedderburn, 1903–12 (39 vols.). See the biographies and studies by Collingwood (1893); Hobson (1898); La Sizeranne (1897); Bardoux (1900); Mrs. Meynell (1900); Frederic Harrison (1902); L. Stephen (*Studies of a Biographer*, iii., 1902); Chevrillon (*La Pensée de Ruskin*, 1909); Benson (1911).

Ruskin was mentally a self-made man, and his doctrine proceeds directly from instinct. From the first his susceptibility to emotion was very strong; nature, and such works of art as appeal to the soul, as stir up the poetic imagination or the feeling of religious sublimity, very early began raising in him his most moving impressions. His sense of a calling was at first that of an enthusiastic lover of art, only drawn to æsthetic theory by his desire to proselytize. The intensely suggestive landscapes of Turner, interpreted by a kind of noble mysticism of light, came as a revelation to Ruskin; he derived from them his theory of realism, which to him meant a passionate fidelity to the truth of vision; so that details must be respected and copied whenever attentive observation is an act of faith, a dutiful acknowledging of Providence, the recognition of the irreducible difference which exists between the individual wealth of concrete forms, and the relative poverty of forms evolved by reason; but details have no value in themselves, and a doctrine whereby art is tied down to a cold, cruel or mean precision is an error, the sure sign of a hidden corruption. Thus the principles of Ruskin can be explained only in the light of the Puritan influences which transfuse his whole being, and through which his logic is unconsciously refracted. By the various needs of his sensibility, the Pre-Raphaelite dogma of minute accuracy in details is reconciled with the cult of Turner, the most impetuously subjective of artists, and with a scornful condemnation of the most decidedly realistic schools.

The reason is that æsthetic activity is not an end in itself. Beauty is the flower-like expression of a Divine soul which lives in nature, and which gives to every being its form, the index to its function. The full development of this form corresponds to the full exercise of the function; and thus beauty is the sign of an harmonious accord with the will of Providence. There exists, therefore, an inner bond linking up the happy blossoming of every creature with its physical and moral well-being; and as the human arts all imply the existence of collective relationships, it is the healthy vigour, or in other words the moral purity, of social groups, which supports the brilliance of the great artistic epochs. There are virtues behind the strong and faithful adaptations, the bold or shrewd inventions, which give all monuments their solidity, their sublimity or their elegance; and *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* are essentially spiritual. The anonymous builders of the Gothic churches threw into their task a conscientiousness out of which grew the perfect workmanship of their handicraft; and the aspiration which sustains the pointed rise of the ogive, just like the naïve naturalism which adorns it with carved leaves and field flowers, owes its unequalled fecundity to the sincere fervour of a religious age.

And so the rock polished by the waters, the mountain with its load of forests and snow, and its murmur of many torrents, the crystal, the fern, and the face of man, all speak a symbolical language, which the artist interprets; the past history of the earth, the energies of matter and life, the promises of the spiritual future, are there disclosed to the seeing eye; to translate them into a more explicit language, is to create the beautiful.

And the history of societies gives the clue to that of the arts. In Venice an original civilization is brought into being by the struggle against an unpromising nature, and by a daily heroism, pursued even when success and riches had been achieved. The profusion, the abounding joy of her stones enclose a wisdom, a truth, a moral balance; they are the hymn sung forth by a nation in the prosperity and in the faith of her youth; and it is no matter that an innocent paganism should mingle in them with Christianity, that these thanksgivings should be rendered to Heaven, which smiles upon the daring schemes of the republic, to the sea which bears its fleets afar, and to the sun which brings out the full beauty of its fresh colours. The architecture of the Doges' Palace is still uncorrupted. Is there not a faith in it, the child-like pure love of all God's creatures; and a suppleness, an elasticity, some irregularity? Everything Venetian, in later years, degenerates at the same time; and the style of the monuments, the painters' touch, like the morals of the republic and its politics, all betray through affectation, through sombre colourings, and through the choice of sensual subjects, the inroads of vice and tyranny, the gradual loss of that inner spirit of joy—the influx of the divine grace without which no nation can hope to survive.

A mind roused by the meditation of the sacred laws which preside over the production of the beautiful, and which keep intact the power of creating it, was to shirk no issue that his apostolate might raise; the prophet of a social gospel was latent in the æsthetician. From the day when Ruskin realized that all the forces of material progress were driving the order of human life in the opposite direction to that decreed by God-inspired Nature, he rose against those forces, and alone in his generation waged war with them. His argument was more courageous than that of Carlyle; it took stock more widely of the economic facts of the day. By laying hold of the concrete aspects of social health, the artist came to perceive the positive data of the problem, which the moralist had overlooked because he transcended them with his keen metaphysical intuition. What was wanted so that mankind might be governed by healthful rhythms, out of which beauty in art and life might blossom of itself, was a justice, a charity, a simple dignity in the relationship of man with man, which the whole movement of modern times had tended to destroy, and from which it was daily receding farther. There was great truth, therefore, in Carlyle's saying that the soul of society was diseased; but the ugliness of an industrial world and the selfishness of the economic order went no less to prove it than the anarchy of the Parliamentary system. It was a question not only of authority being restored, but of its being actively and generously efficient; a bold and strenuous effort was necessary, so that the whole method of the production and of the distribution of wealth might be changed.

Thus was brought about the crusade in which Ruskin denounced the age of machinery, which made the workman a slave to the tool; the spirit of individualism, which justified a heartlessness reprobated alike by religious duty and by human feeling; the law of supply and demand, which fixed prices by pitting rival egoisms against each other. If there is no wealth but life, then all political economy is an abdication of human spirituality before the fact of animality. In other domains, mind had conquered matter, or was locked with it in an eternal struggle through which it was itself refined; its duty, here as well, was to fight.

The plans for fundamental reform at which Ruskin tried his hand are inconsistent and vague. Laying stress at once on authority, the family and religion as practical ideals, they develop the organic principles of order and solidarity which he had laid down in common with Carlyle. In certain directions, where he attempted to obtain solutions that would be immediately put into practice, his effort to all appearances has not been less sterile; but his general intuitions possessed a fertility which experience has already placed beyond all doubt. The humanizing of industry by the re-establishment of the small workshop, and by renouncing all over-elaborate forms of mechanism, may have remained a dream; it is an ideal which cannot be put aside; and in other ways, it seems as if the facts themselves were tending in its direction. The central faith which animates this doctrine is a powerful advocacy of citizenship through the cult of service; in this form, that faith has permeated practice in a measure as yet incomplete, but which is still increasing. Ruskin takes his place beside Carlyle among the great regenerators of the conscience in a social sense, and of the national vitality itself.

His work thus had, and still has, an influence on the deeper resolves and the acts of a people, which exceeds the limits of mere literary popularity. Its artistic merit, as well, will assure its survival, despite the fact that its quality is not always equal or unexceptionable. Ruskin improved upon the example set by Landor, De Quincey, and the romantic renovators of English prose; he still increased the range of its effects, by adding to harmony and animation the resources of the richest imagination and colouring. Always poetic, his style is not always in perfect taste; it shows at times oratorical cadences, a superabundant wealth of words, and superfluous ornaments. The impression of a too continuous and pressing eloquence, which it leaves with the reader, is bound up with the very sincerity of a zeal which is never half in earnest, whatever conviction it may adopt. This rhetoric, and this monotony, do not, however, take away their charm or their overpowering force from Ruskin's magnificent evocations, from his grand landscapes, transfused with the spirit of the highest pantheistic sublimity; nor even from his passages of masterly analysis, with all their picturesque precision of touch, their energy in the handling of detail. On the other hand, an inherent diffuseness, an inability to develop his thought in a meditated and steady order, detract somewhat from the convincing value of the impassioned arguments in which the apostle pours his heart out. Through this exuberance of rhythmic and sonorous language there runs a more familiar, more spontaneous vein; that of some works, like the *Fors Clavigera,* where the artist, no longer strained, instead of exhausting his temperament, draws upon the accumulated energy of his passion and his faith, and most happily reconciles forcefulness with simplicity.

To be consulted: *Cambridge History of English Literature,* vol. xii. chap. xii.; vol. xiii. chaps. i. x. xi. xii.; vol. xiv. chap. iii.; Cazamian, *Roman social,* 1903; idem, *Modern England,* 1911; idem, *Carlyle,* 1913; Charpentier, *La Peinture anglaise* (no date); Chevrilion, *La Pensée de Ruskin,* 1909; Elton, *Survey of English Literature,* 1830–80, 1920; Monypenny and Buckle, *Life of Lord Beaconsfield,* 1910–20; Ollard, *Short History of the Oxford Movement,* 1915; Thureau-Dangin, *Renaissance catholique en Angleterre,* 1912; Walker, *The Literature of the Victorian Era,* 1910.

CHAPTER IV

THE POETRY OF THE VICTORIAN ERA

1. **Principal Themes of Inspiration.**—The poetry of the Victorian age—that of the middle part of the century, between the first Romanticism which fills its beginning, and the second which precedes its end—is woven of the two main strands of thought and feeling which run through the central period; that poetry finds its proper perspective on the intricate, shifting background of their interplay. The inspiration of each individual poet can be described more precisely in relation to those broad lines of development.

Viewed as a whole, the display of poetic talent during these years is as prolific as it is subtly varied in the wide range of its colouring. One can, however, distinguish in it two groups of poets; they are not divided because of any well-defined antagonism—indeed, they are united by many intermediary shades; but one group rather seeks to identify itself with the contemporary movement in intellectual and critical thought, stressing the need for objectivity, and aiming at a standard of balance, based upon the quality of precision in each idea; while the other group seems to favour the idealistic reaction with its desire for emotion, its cult of beauty and its dreamy tendency, weaving the main themes of vision round the subtle blending of imagination and sensibility. From the point of view of general literary history, the first group logically precedes the second, explaining, so to speak, and determining its existence, just as action naturally precedes reaction. The Victorian age is above all characterized by an intellectual and positive movement. But poetry is not always the surest, nor the most minutely accurate symptom of the evolution of mind. Compared with other forms of art, it may show an appreciable backwardness; it is the privileged domain of conservative tendencies. In fact, the poets of the second group occupy a position of slight priority with relation to those of the first. A student who keeps chronology in mind will begin his examination with them.

The reason is that the idealistic reaction does not constitute an absolute beginning; in many respects it represents the natural, direct continuation of Romanticism. Neither in literature nor in the inner life of the soul can it be said that the properly Romantic inspiration is exhausted after 1830. It is seen in mixed forms, and combines with the other psychological elements which characterize the new period. There is scarcely a poet from now onwards who does not reveal, in some degree, the reciprocal penetration and fusion of the influences in conflict.

There is an element of Romanticism in all the Victorian poets. With many, this remains their strongest and most obvious characteristic. But the spiritual change that has taken place, and the atmosphere of a different age, give their art another aspect. The new features are either a more strongly disciplined manner, a more elaborate perfection of the form; or a more spontaneous sympathy with emotions which seem to exclude the Romantic obsession of self; or again, a stringent intellectualism which colours the highest flights of the imagination. In the same way, the poets who show most clearly in their work the decline of purely Romantic themes no doubt derive their inspiration from the restless activity of the mind; they are occupied with mere truth; philosophy and psychology appeal to them; their poems are analyses, demonstrations, into which one feels that science has instilled something of its method; their ideal lies, or seems to lie, in objectivity. But all their poetry is impregnated with a diffused Romanticism, which at times crystallizes in words that seem to be but the echo of those of yesterday. In view, therefore, of the very varied and mixed tendencies at work, strict classification would be arbitrary. Writers and groups can be studied according to a certain order; but this order must remain pliant, avoid all system, and leave full scope to the study of individual temperaments.

2. Tennyson.—If the poets of the Victorian era had to be grouped round two central figures, one of these would be Tennyson[1] and the other Browning. Tradition has established this parallel and, one might say, imposed it. To avoid it altogether would seem tempting; but it fits in too well with the main lines of the present study not to be adopted here.

Tennyson shares much more than his contemporary Browning in the direct prolongation of Romanticism. Not only do his early ventures show him to be imbued by the influence of his great predecessors, but he will never deny them. Even to the very close of his long career, his mental attitude will not cease to be characterized by a sensibility which reacts to the stimulus of things, and which takes itself for their measure. His poetry, even when it is dramatic, will always be, as with Hugo, the sonorous echo of his own soul. But, on the other hand, he follows the evolution of the century, adapting himself to the principal changes it brings with it, in a spirit that is neither too passive nor too stubborn. He is aware of all the new influences at work in the atmosphere of his epoch, some of which stimulate his moral convictions and prejudices, whilst others damp them. He feels the tremendous attraction of science and critical thought, and yields to it or, more often, fights against it, thus taking up, of necessity, the attitude of the abstract thinker. From the point of view of the animating force as well as of the essential intentions which shape his work, Tennyson must be classed with the supporters of intuitionalism, in the wake of Carlyle and Ruskin. He knows that his spiritualistic beliefs are menaced, and so he becomes their defender. He has a philosophy, therefore: that of an age when faith is the prize of a victory, and remains open to obsessing doubts.

He is not less a Victorian by the quality of his expression. While Romanticism had tended rather to lay stress on spontaneity of feeling, Tennyson deliberately emphasizes the importance of discipline in form. He is an indefatigable, conscientious and meticulous artist. His poems after going through successive revisions are sometimes hardly recognizable, and almost always closer to perfection. He is aware of the fact that in this endeavour lies the principle of a fruitful departure; and that the preceding generation, however inspired it may have been, did not aim at the strictly condensed expression which could have contained the enthusiasm of its lyric outbursts. After the lapse of two centuries, he again experiences, next to an age of self-outpouring and passion, that need for balance, for a fine and compact aptness of phrase, which poets like Waller and Dryden had felt. As the heir of Romantic tradition, he completes and corrects it by incorporating with it the essential tenets of classicism.

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[1] Alfred Tennyson, born in Lincolnshire in 1809, was the son of a pastor, and showed, at a very early age, a calling to poetry; already in 1827 he published, in conjunction with his two brothers, an anonymous collection of verse, *Poems by Two Brothers;* studied at Cambridge, published *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* (1830) which, like the *Poems* of 1833, aroused no enthusiasm; but public taste turned slowly in his favour, and his *Poems* of 1842 placed him in the front rank. *The Princess* (1849), *In Memoriam* (1850) show the growth of his inspiration. Appointed Poet Laureate in 1850, he settled in the Isle of Wight, and spent the remainder of his days in happy, calm seclusion as a prince of literature. *Maud* (1855) had a varying success, that of the *Idylls of the King* (1859, '69, '89) was universal. Besides the publication of numerous poems (*Enoch Arden,* 1864; *Ballads,* 1880; *Tiresias,* 1885; *Demeter,* 1889; *The Death of Œnone,* 1892, etc.), he wrote dramas (*Harold,* 1877; *The Cup,* 1881; *Becket,* 1884, etc.), several of which were successfully performed. Raised to the peerage in 1884, he died in 1892, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. *Poems,* ed. by Hallam, Lord Tennyson, 9 vols., 1907–8; *In Memoriam,* ed. by Robinson, 1901; ed. by Percival, 1907; *Maud,* ed. by Wordsworth, 1899; *Idylls of the King,* ed. by Wheeler, 1913; *Enoch Arden,* ed. by Beljame, 1892; ed. by Marwick, 1914. See biography by Hallam, Lord Tennyson, 1897; studies by Waugh, 1893; Van Dyke, 1898; Lang (Modern English Writers), 1901; Lyall (English Men of Letters), 1902; Bradley (*Commentary on In Memoriam*), 1902; Benson (*Little Biographies*), 1904; Dhaleine (*A Study on Tennyson's Idylls of the King*), 1905; Lauvrière (*Repetition and Parallelism in Tennyson*), 1910; Lounsbury (*Life and Times of Tennyson*), 1915; Roz (*Grands écriv. étrang.*), 1911; Baker (*Concordance to Poetical and Dramatic Works*), 1914; Fausset, 1923; Nicolson, 1923.

But however much the moral needs behind his literary technique may resemble the opinions and preferences which, in classical times, inspired the taste for a sober type of beauty, Tennyson does not possess the instinct of sobriety; or rather, it does not dominate his art, but is continually assailed by contrary tendencies. He is a poet who has learned from the Romantics the sense and value of intensity; but the diffused memory of the last four centuries, with all their progressive enriching of the artistic mind, forbids him the perception or the intuition of an intenseness allied with a forceful simplicity; he hardly can be intense but by forcing upon vigour the touch of refinement. And thus intensity with him, through the very process of its realization, is weakened. . . .

The art of Tennyson, which is, as it were, the flower brought forth by the slow growth of a national culture, while of a very pure and delicate quality, is not exempt from a slight touch of Alexandrinism; the savour of the artificial, the superiority of ornamental effects, of a highly finished form, of a fastidious exclusiveness, as against the originality of the thought, all introduce the subtle aroma of decadence into his poetry, supremely refined and impeccable as it is. Whole sections of his work are marred by this undue striving after style, which he vainly strains his almost unerring tact to hide, and which, with the lapse of time, already assumes the character of a mannerism. Other parts are more relatively free from it, and it would be easy to exaggerate this superficial weakness. The reaction of our age against the age that went before has brought with it a disparagement of Tennyson which is very probably too severe. His art retains a sufficient sincerity of tone, it is supported by a sufficiently vigorous truth of feeling, to render acceptable the elaborate elegance of his style. His work as a whole will assuredly keep its appeal, and not be relegated to the class of writings with a refined but ephemeral brilliance.

His early poems show him to be a master in a facile, graceful and harmonious key, supple enough yet to try his hand in various ways, but lacking still the strength of personality necessary to allay the misgivings roused by his dazzling cleverness. In these first efforts he deals in word-painting and delightful harmonies; he shows exquisite feeling for the music of syllables and the charm of imagery. In some of the poems, one can feel suggestions from Shelley, Keats, or Coleridge. In others we catch the glow of a poetic impressionability, of a gift for visionary and mystical effects, revealing the innermost soul of a temperament that, beneath the outward show of a well-balanced art, strives to conceal the feverish agitation of an almost morbid mind. But a common feature of all the poems is that caressing music of the melody, that unerring felicity in the metrical translation of feelings, which are from the point of view of poetic style, if not from that of lyrical expression, a contribution worthy of the most talented artists.

The collection of pieces published by Tennyson in 1842 shows the poet in the full command of his first style. His inspiration finds vent in a rich blending of Romantic subjectivism with an objective interest in the changes wrought by time among men and ideas, which represents the new spirit of a century of criticism and history. In his own way he is experiencing the almost universal desire to go beyond the limits of self, and so he borrows his themes from the present, from the Middle Ages, from classical antiquity, from legend or fancy as well as from reality. But his capacity of vicarious experience is limited; he revives only the emotions with which he can identify himself, and thus the personal note is always and everywhere in evidence. It is this personality which reduces the most opposite of tonalities, brilliant or subdued, to a sort of serene equality, and bathes them in the calm of quiet thoughtfulness. It is also the force at work, transfusing every subject he treats of with a kind of inherent moral idealism; and this springs from the noble exaltation as well as the suppressed anguish of an inner eagerness, fed, even at this date, by experience, by meditation and suffering. The most outstanding traits in this early period of his art are the brilliant and, one might say, the chosen quality of the imagination, at once fresh, full of life, and rich rather than sensual or plastic; and the variety of the rhythms, which associate a masterly liberty in effects with an extreme severity in prosodic feeling. But at the same time the poet seeks to amplify his resources by tending towards symbolism. *The Lotus Eaters, The Palace of Art, A Dream of Fair Women,* are not only masterpieces of musical and visual evocation. What they call forth in precise images is carried on through a whole series of mental potentialities, which do not really constitute a philosophy, but which have the actual power of an immaterial suggestion.

With *The Princess* and *In Memoriam* the poetry of Tennyson acquires the substance which it may have seemed to lack. The first of these poems introduces a serious idea in a way at once attractive and pleasing, though not a little over-sweet; the grave nature of the theme is often a disturbing element in the easy enjoyment of what is essentially a fantasy; and on the other hand the charm of the scenic descriptions tends to eclipse the rather fictitious dramatic action, borne up by characters who are too obviously the puppets of theory. And yet, the descriptive or emotional lyricism in the poem develops round the structure of a subject; the scenes or episodes, a trifle deficient in sustained energy, which the poet spontaneously produces, nevertheless group themselves into a whole where each supports the other. Several of the interludes are of rare and entrancing beauty.

It is difficult not to believe that the series of elegiac effusions (*In Memoriam*) which Tennyson matured for a long time, into which he poured the best of his thought, the deepest of his feelings and the patient labour of seventeen years, is as well the summit of his endeavours. There are weak points in the poem—a certain monotony, a rhythmic plan which in its detail is astonishingly varied, but in its general outline somewhat too simple and regular, and the obviously unequal struggle, at times, with a baffling problem or a too precise formula; still, Tennyson has found in his mourning for his friend an inspiration deep and diverse enough to lend itself to all the aspects of thought, to all the states of the soul, and give an inner unity to the one hundred and thirty-one paragraphs of a long philosophical monologue. The problem of immortality is treated in terms of life rather than of dialectic thought; with the interchange which it evokes between doubt and fear, dreams and reality, ardent desire and unswerving confidence, it is viewed in its various bearing on the events of daily life, on the change from season to season, on the broad displays of the physical world, on the troubles which assail the heart of man. The poet's grief goes through a series of stages, from the poignant pain which the memory of his friend's death recalls, through regret, and the anxious communion of the soul with an indifferent Nature, to a serene resignation. His outraged feeling finds solace in a broader love for mankind; and his intuitive conviction of a spiritual life after death gathers strength. *In Memoriam* reflects in every line the moral and religious conflict of the century in the aspect it assumed about 1850, and the poem will always bear the ineffaceable stamp of this date. Yet the thoughts therein expressed are deep enough, to make the conflict not so much one of a particular epoch, as of all time; they voice universal emotions. It cannot be denied that in its more didactic passages the philosophical argument tends to be a crushing weight; but in the lines where the meditation flows of itself, as in the moments of earnest reverie, it contributes a note of sublimity and force which never fails in its persuasive appeal. And it is only the secret magic of great metaphysical anguish that can shed such heart-stirring light upon those landscapes of the soul.

Maud as a poem interests and pleases us by reason of the very traits which surprised the contemporaries of Tennyson: the more vigorous touches, the study of a morbid psychology, and the boldness of a lyricism which carries to a very high degree the fusion of spiritual life and Nature. The drama in itself, however, has no consistency; the conclusion is artificial; and if the masterly skill of the artist comes into full possession of all its resources, it is only to draw dangerously near to their abuse. The twenty-five years which followed the publication of *In Memoriam* are those in which Tennyson, having risen to eminent fame in his own lifetime, used to the full and with perfect clear-sightedness all the means of seduction which he owed to his genius and to his experience. His greatest works no longer belong to this period. His technical skill as an artist had developed at the expense of his creative originality. *Enoch Arden* with its sentimentality and conventional colouring, and despite its supremely adroit nicety of phrase, has few admirers to-day. As for the *Idylls of the King,* intended by the poet to be his most spacious effort, they only remain a typical product of Victorian art. Here we have the triumph of an idealization by principle which seeks for beauty in refinement, and which to veil the crude elements of passion as well as the problems of thought, transposes them into an atmosphere of distant legendary lore. The choice of the episodes, the quality of the images, the hieratic attitude of the figures, the ecstatic simplicity of the outline, the restrained ardour of the feelings, the rich light as from a stained-glass window which suffuses the whole work, all suggest the contemporary painting of Rossetti and Burne-Jones. During this phase of his career Tennyson fell a victim to the fascination of the Pre-Raphaelite ideal, to which he had already been drawn by his partiality for precise detail and minute observation. By a sheer miracle he fulfilled his intention, and gave the cycle of tales, in which, round the magic name of Arthur, he wove symbolic and modern allegories, a genuine human interest, over and above the charm of a somewhat bloodless distinction. Some of his characters are living, and it must be admitted that the touch of the writer, the artist or the musician in language, has never been more exquisite. But at the same time one cannot forget the essential artificiality of this imaginative epic, at once mystical and moralizing. It destroys the original character which the poetic instinct of generation after generation had given those legends, and in its place substitutes the languorous suavity of a conventional age.

It is surprising to note that in the last period of his work Tennyson returns to inspirations of a simpler nature. There is something of a more direct appeal in the poems he wrote after 1875, although they are less delightfully attractive. Once again he takes up the ancient and classical, or idyllic and English, themes of his first collections, and treats them in a sober style which often reaches to virility. At the same time the feeling in them shows a tendency towards sadness. *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After* is the singularly frank confession, too impassioned perhaps not to be a little jarring, of the bitterness which the aged poet experienced as he saw the closing century threatened with an inner decay. Yet until his death the marvellous gifts his nature was endowed with did not fail to create the same beautiful images, or to compose the same delicate and suggestive harmonies; the accurate sense of his musical instinct never belied itself.

His work, however, has other aspects still: the humorous sketches, the poems written in a peasant vein, whose language is mixed with dialect; the occasional pieces in which the Poet Laureate gives national pride some of its highest expressions; the dramas, of which several still are staged: highly polished works these, devoid of any deep dramatic life, but not destitute of merit in their pathos and psychology, and showing a moral quality which is never otherwise than noble.

To sum up, the impression left by Tennyson is more substantial and varied than the reader might be led to expect from the impoverished stylization of his genius, which the poet himself no doubt was responsible for and encouraged, but of which he has been the victim. As the finest example of a culture that is too wise, too scrupulous and conscientious, to countenance any imprudence on the part of the artistic imagination—even that imprudence which is a condition of the most fruitful endeavours—Tennyson is still near enough to the elementary forces of Romanticism, to retain much of their creative energy; and the delicacy of his taste so genuinely reflects the purity of his spiritualized nature, that he runs no risk of enervating poetry, while idealizing it. He has in him strains of passion, of disquietude, as well as germs of instability; and they undoubtedly appear through the outer polish of his art as a contradiction. But if the substance of his work is thus less homogeneous, on the other hand the writer becomes more human and more true to life. Tennyson pre-eminently represents Victorian literature, a privilege which to-day is in the eyes of many one of his shortcomings; the time will come, no doubt, when impartial criticism will judge him not as the greatest poet, but as the most admirable artist of the nineteenth century in England, inferior only in this respect to what Keats gave promise of, and at rare moments came to achieve.

One can count all the more firmly on a reaction of public opinion in his favour, as the vein of his genius is distinctly national, and he has voiced better than any other the instincts, feelings and preferences which have never ceased to feed the moral personality of the English people. One thing alone might detract from the value of this claim, and that would be the decisive establishment of a European culture; even then, Tennyson would remain the most faithful echo of the original voice of a nation. He is not only British, but insular. To this fact he owes a certain narrowness of outlook; but on the other hand he gains therefrom an incomparable plenitude and sureness in the intuition of the deep attachment of his race to traditions, to feelings, and to horizons, of which he has known how to reveal the ineradicable force, the freshness, and the tranquillity.

3. **Beddoes, Hood, Elliott, etc.**—The brief and tragic career of Beddoes[1] shows clearly how inexact it would be to place about 1830 the actual end of Romanticism. Impregnated to the innermost core of his being with that form of moral disquietude which the weak and nervous creatures of all nations had experienced, he owed it to his temper, where the germs of disorder were deeper and more organic, to remain attuned to it, in an epoch during which the spirit no longer blew that way. His work, unequal in many respects, retains, however, a pathetic and touching interest. Several of his lyrical poems have an inspired flow, a poignant melancholy, which recall a Shelley. His best drama, *Death's Jest Book,* is perhaps the most astonishing miracle of that intuitive divination which revived the spirit of the Elizabethan theatre among certain privileged writers of the nineteenth century. And if the daring of the imagination, the spontaneously figurative quality of the language, the ease and strength of the

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[1] Thomas Lovell Beddoes, born in 1803, studied medicine at Göttingen, led a wandering life in Germany and Switzerland, poisoned himself in 1849, leaving poems, *The Improvvisatore* (1821), *The Bride's Tragedy* (1822); a drama, *Death's Jest Book,* and other poems, etc., appeared after his death (1850–51). *Poetical Works,* ed. by Gosse, 1890; *Poems,* ed. by Colles, 1907; see the study by L. Strachey (*Books and Characters*), 1922.

rhythm, are made more intricate by a restless intellectual research, this philosophical preoccupation is brought into harmony with the passionate flight of an untrammelled genius, as in the work of a contemporary of Shakespeare. On the other hand, the obsession of mystery, of terror, of gruesome details, the fascination of death, together with a trace of Mephistophelean irony, seem to indicate the influence of continental Romanticism and of German literature.[1]

The figure of Hood[2] is not less suggestive. He could catch a glimpse of Keats, and his early poetry is steeped in the radiation of that remembrance. His life is one long story of suffering, fraught with troubles, and he appears to have been a creature singled out by Fate for affliction. The Romanticism of emotion is deeply rooted in his nature, and indeed represents his true temperament as well as his experience of life. Like others of the same sensitive disposition, however, he has the gift of sparkling humour, and no one with the exception of his friend Lamb has redeemed the pertness of his puns with so rich a display of original imagination. His humour was more successful than his pathos, and it was by holding a brief as a jester that Hood managed to earn from the public a less scanty living. But before his death he returned to themes where he was truest to himself, investing his verse with the deep note of true emotion; on such work his reputation rests to-day.

In *The Song of the Shirt* and *The Bridge of Sighs*, the Romantic feeling of individual suffering is extended into social compassion. Thus these two poems reveal a transition parallel to that in the novels of Dickens and Kingsley. Such pieces, where the poignant force of feeling is not always clothed in faultless form, and several shorter but perfect masterpieces, whose appeal recalls Wordsworth with an even more tender touch, give the literary figure of Hood a characteristic feature: the feminine delicacy of one who through suffering is forced back into himself, there to discover in intuitive perception and sympathy the source of a deep simplicity which is equal to the greatest art.

It is also to his social inspiration that Elliott[3] owes the survival of his work, in itself rather uneven. It reveals, even at this late date, abundant traces of the phraseology and rhythms of the eighteenth century. His vehement emotion is usually unable to create for itself an original expression; but some of his political poems are irresistibly powerful and generous. His work evinces as well the rudiments of a distinct talent for description. His landscapes, and his rustic scenes, have the colouring of reality, with a suggestion of delightful freshness.

4. Pre-Raphaelitism: D. G. Rossetti, Morris.—A little before 1850, a number of young artists, drawn together by similar aspirations, make a common doctrine for themselves. Classical tradition in art, even after the advent of Romanticism, is as imperious as ever. Vainly have Constable and Turner renovated landscape painting; the teaching of the schools will not depart from the cult of former ideals of nobility, which have become as empty as they are theatrical. Technical skill now reflects the hollow nature of the inspiration behind it; it demands no effort, is lax, and even lends to an art which is little else than make-believe. Such are certainly not the methods of enthusiastic painters who, enthralled by beauty, succeed in making their delineation not unworthy of the original. Long before the reign of sham artistry, one school of painting had proved what could be done by faith, when served by scrupulous devotion to art. The primitive Italian painters put on canvas only such figures or visions as appealed to their hearts; so there was the atmosphere of deep truth in the sweetness or naïvety of their work, while all the passion of religious love for God's creation found expression in the faithfulness and the minuteness of their realism. The example they set shows the way by which a degenerate art can yet be redeemed. Just as with them, a creed is necessary; it has to be lived up to, and technical skill must be subservient to it. As the painter's invention is more sincere, it will create more striking effects; and the more exact the means adopted to express it, the more telling will the work prove to be.

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[1] George Darley, born in 1795, of Irish descent, was another example of a persisting Romanticism, the first expressions of which were anterior to 1830. *The Errors of Ecstasie*, 1822; *Labours of Idleness*, 1826; *Sylvia*, 1827; *Thomas à Becket*, 1840; *Ethelstan*, 1841. He edited the works of Beaumont and Fletcher in 1840, and died in 1846. *Nepenthe*, ed. by Streatfeild, 1897. *Poetical Works*, ed. by Colles, 1908.

[2] Thomas Hood, born in 1790 in London, the son of a publisher of Scottish descent, studied engraving, was sub-editor of the *London Magazine*, connected with Charles Lamb, etc.; his serious poetry was coldly received; his *Odes and Addresses to Great People* (1825) were a great success, just as his *Whims and Oddities* (1826–27). After many tentative efforts in literature, he died in 1845 a poor man, amid the most cruel suffering. *Poetical Works*, ed. by Jerrold, 1906; *Works*, 11 vols., 1832–34. See Jerrold, *Thomas Hood, His Life and Times*, 1907; Oswald, *Thomas Hood, und die soziale Tendenzdichtung*, 1904.

[3] Ebenezer Elliott (1781–1849), born in Yorkshire, the son of a manufacturer, was an iron-merchant by trade in Sheffield; published descriptive verse, *Vernal Walk* (1801), *Night* (1818), etc.; but owed his popularity to his *Corn-Law Rhymes* (1831), in which he denounced the egoism of the legal measures taken against the importation of foreign cereals. *Works*, 2 vols., 1876. See Watkins, *Life, Poetry and Letters of Elliott*, 1850.

There is one dominant personality in this Pre-Raphaelite group,[1] that of Rossetti,[2] painter and poet; his double vocation and the magnetism of his innate enthusiasm explain the foremost place he occupies, not only at the heart of the Pre-Raphaelite movement after 1850, but also in the first beginnings of that diffuse æstheticism which was to be one of the features of the closing years of the century. He himself has realized a type of existence in which the only principle is that of art, and he has given a concrete proof of its unity. His Italian blood is the source of his outstanding originality. To it he owes the strength and keenness of his sensations, the need and the cult of form, the certainty of an inherent purity in passion. He is a stranger to the hesitations of a divided Northern soul, when it comes up against the apparent conflict of the flesh and the mind.

But his plastic imagination did not find perfect satisfaction either in form or in colour. His half-English heredity and the influence of the moral environment in which his whole life was spent perhaps explain, in his temperament, the influx of a mystic idealism, whose expression tends to be symbolic. In his poetry as in his painting, he gradually drifted away from the realism of his early years.

And in Symbolism we have the key to the true character of his work. He is drawn towards it, from the first poem in which he reveals his style, *The Blessed*

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[1] The best known of its members were William Holman Hunt and John Everett Millais; Ford Madox Brown was not long in joining the group. They founded a review, *The Germ,* to propagate their ideas. Ruskin, although not actually identified with them, openly shared their opinions. E. B. Burne-Jones and G. F. Watts were inspired a little later by the same spirit.

[2] Dante Gabriel Rossetti, born in 1828, the son of an Italian refugee in England, received an English schooling, took up painting and followed the classes at the Royal Academy. He was also a poet. In 1849 he produced his first picture, while his first poems appeared in *The Germ* (1850). As the inspirer and leader of the Pre-Raphaelite movement he exercised a wide influence; collaborated in *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* (1856), translated fragments of mediæval Italian verse, and the *Vita Nuova* of Dante (*The Early Italian Poets,* etc., 1861). In 1870 appeared his *Poems,* which Robert Buchanan condemned in an article ("The Fleshly School of Poetry," *Contemp. Review,* 1871) on the ground of their unhealthy sensuality. He added to his translations from the Italian (*Dante and His Circle,* 1874), published *Ballads and Sonnets* (1881), and died in 1882. *Collected Works,* ed. by W. M. Rossetti, 1886; *Works,* with notes, ed. by W. M. Rossetti, 1911. See biography by Knight, 1887; biography and letters, ed. by W. M. Rossetti, 1895; the reminiscences of Holman Hunt (*Pre-Raphaelitism,* etc.), 1905; the studies by Sarrazin (*Poètes mod. d'Angleterre*), 1885; Benson (English Men of Letters), 1904; Mourey, 1909; Mrs. Boas, 1914; Dupré (*Un Italien d'Angleterre,* etc.), 1921.

Damozel, to the powerful, gloomy visions of *The Cloud Confines.* And thus intellectuality comes to penetrate what is primarily another conquest of Romanticism, a new application of feeling, grown supreme, to the adjoining domains of literature and æsthetics. Rossetti is the necessary link of communication between two Romantic movements, one of which ebbs away after the first thirty years of the century, while the other rises again in the last three decades. To him it was given to unite them; and in his personality they are associated with the needs properly belonging to the more intellectual period which intervenes. While he experiences to the full the influence of Keats, he is not impervious to that of Browning.

He was conscious of this, and always insisted upon the indispensable part played by the intellect in art. Poetical Pre-Raphaelitism, as he practised it, consists in an attitude of the artist, and a system of expression. The attitude is that of ecstasy, or of an emotion deep enough to offer the characteristics of religious worship, while passion itself is sublimated into a spiritual exaltation. There is a persuasive atmosphere of calm about this emotion, because it is deep and controlled; nothing betrays its intensity, save an occasional turn in the words employed, a tone, an insisting stress, which suffuses with meaning even the simplest expression. These general features are associated with an extremely lucid but intermittent power of attention, which, suddenly aware of some particular aspect of reality, brings it into extraordinary relief, endowing it with a wonderful implicit value. And as the aspects chosen are in nearly every case particular—trifling details, fleeting or subtle impressions—the closeness of the vision, and the fidelity of the descriptive talent, recall in the writings of Rossetti all the minute realism of Raphael's predecessors in painting.

Intensity here is not expressed directly, but by means of exterior signs. We must reflect in order to perceive it. Its expression is thus submitted to an intellectual process, and undergoes a transposition. His poetry has lived on the search after subtle suggestions, most often of a mystic or tragic nature. Its rare quality is to be found in the intimate union, with this element of subtlety, of an ardour which wholly exhausts the force of the emotions, and widens their limits, be they the most familiar or the highest, by lending to them the deep background of some indefinable anguish; while the imagination, delicately refined, and attracted by religious, archaic or allegorical visions, evokes pictures which have an appeal to mind and senses alike. From such a wealth of material the artist derives an extraordinary power of original expression, the power of what remains implicit, the only force able to infuse new life into effects which pure Romanticism in its day had exhausted. Rossetti more than any other poet sought the magic key to true poetry in the spell which allows one to feel what is otherwise inexpressible.

The House of Life, his masterpiece, is a long sonnet sequence where he lays to contribution the most modern aspects of Symbolism, and only very distantly recalls the uninterrupted allegory of the Middle Ages or of the Renaissance. The theme of passionate love, at once sensual and intoxicated with a philosophical mysticism, has never been treated with more sumptuous variety and wealth, in a more subtle and fuller symphony of all the powers of man. His language is the instrument of a music more often liquid than sonorous: it is coloured or, more often, bathed in a pale spirituality; it rings with an eloquence that is powerfully implicit, and at the same time has a suggestive appeal to all the susceptibilities of the soul. When he sometimes attempts to imitate the style of ancient ballads, if he fails to give an impression of simple strength, of nervous rapidity, and to create the real atmosphere of mediæval times, he at least succeeds in skilfully condensing into stanzas of powerful imagery the uninterrupted sequence of a dramatic story, embodying the idea and realization of an overshadowing destiny (*The White Ship, The King's Tragedy,* etc.).

He is a little artificial in the use of his burdens; but, as in *Sister Helen,* his artificiality is felicitous.

Quite other is the temperament of William Morris,[1] a writer, artist and reformer. In him Pre-Raphaelitism is coloured by a nature whose instincts are more broadly English. His imagination fills out the frail forms characteristic of primitive painting; he delights in unfolding broad canvases where languorous effects are bathed in an atmosphere of serenity. He is of the lineage of Spenser, not of Keats, in his commingling of virile strength with the greatest refinement of touch. He spent his vigour in practical creative activities, where the zeal of the æsthete developed into the fuller passion of a social creed.

During his early years he came under the various influences of the idealistic revival, and mixed them up into a quintessential spirit of Romanticism. While at Oxford he was brought into touch with the Anglican renascence; he read and admired Carlyle and Ruskin; Tennyson became a very god for him; and in the first poems of Rossetti he experienced the thrill of a new type of beauty. His personality, after some hesitations, easily succeeded in finding itself. As it developed, it gained strength, but underwent little appreciable change. With *The Defence of Guinevere* closes the period of apprenticeship; *Jason, The Earthly Paradise* and *Poems by the Way* reveal an inspiration rich to overflowing. Even and pure, its hidden force is perceptible only in its easy flow. It murmurs in harmonious and cadenced song, the variety and suppleness of which recall at once the style of Chaucer and that of Spenser. It pours itself forth in innumerable rhythmic forms, but always with an ease and a sweetness peculiarly its own, which, without smoothing down their differences, give them the unity of a common tonality. Blank verse, rhymed verse, the complicated or the simple stanza, are all united in one absorbing music; and its quicker or slower measure, long or short, does not always succeed in redeeming it from a certain monotony; yet there is a fascinating spell in it which can awaken and soothe the pensive yearning of the soul.

In this murmurous stream the world of images is mirrored. The poetry of Morris is for the most part a succession of pictures, forming a vista of great and seemingly inexhaustible wealth. They are drawn from every point of the human horizon, from the past as from the present; but perhaps mostly from the lands of legendary or mysterious beauty; from the fable and from classical antiquity, above all from the chivalric tales and adventures of the Middle Ages, for those were the times of his heart's desire; and modern civilization is blotted out, in the pictures of the world of to-day, to allow us to see only the fresh, green, unchanging countryside. Episodes taken from the Trojan War or from the English struggles in France, scenes from Scandinavian mythology or the Arthurian cycles, fugitive impressions noted from daily observation on the wayside—such are his themes. But in spite of their variety, there is one general quality which is common to them all, and it is their Romantic colouring. They all seem to weave themselves into a vast tapestry, an ornamental decoration of artistic beauty, wrought by an imagination that is enthralled by the phantasmagoria of the ages. And all the figures who meet there are bathed in a fresh, pensive, flower-like beauty; they convey the impression of souls whose spiritual destiny has brought with it a mysterious strength and a spontaneous grace; a strange light, an almost melancholy serenity seems to hover in their looks, whether they be heroes or traitors or maidens or lovers. And it is this air of sad reflection visible even beneath the smile, and haunting every portrait from the poet's pen, that reveals the general dominant tone of all his reverie: the feeling of voluptuous delight mingled with the bitterness gathered from the flight of time; and a sense of the bewildering confusion of reality and dreams, creating an atmosphere of constant semi-hallucination.

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[1] William Morris, born in 1834, near London, studied at Oxford, was influenced by the Tractarians and Rossetti, and with the painter Burne-Jones became one of the central figures of a group of ardent æsthetes (The Brotherhood) whose organ was *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* (1856); in it Morris published poems and prose tales. Renouncing an ecclesiastical career, he studied painting, and in 1861 became the inspiring mind in a firm of decorative art, where by his manifold activities he brought about a transformation in furnishing, etc., during the last thirty years of the nineteenth century. His work as a writer continued in the publication of verse: *The Defence of Guinevere and Other Poems,* 1858; *The Life and Death of Jason,* 1867; *The Earthly Paradise,* 1868–70; *Love Is Enough,* 1872; *Poems by the Way,* 1891, etc.; in poetical translations of the classics: the *Æneid* and the *Odyssey,* 1867; or of French: *Old French Romances,* 1896; while his taste for Northern literature inspired *The Story of Sigurd the Volsung,* etc. (in verse), 1877; translations in prose (individual or in collaboration): *Grettir Saga,* 1869; *Volsunga Saga,* 1870; *Three Northern Love Stories,* 1875; *The Saga Library,* 1891–95; *The Tale of Beowulf,* 1895, etc. A convert to Socialism, he criticized his age in pages where are revealed his dreams of the future: *A Dream of John Ball,* etc., 1888; *News from Nowhere,* 1891, etc. Establishing a printing press in his manor at Kelmscott, he produced art editions. From his pen we have also a series of imaginative tales: *The Roots of the Mountains,* 1880; *The Wood beyond the World,* 1894; *The Well at the World's End,* 1896; *The Sundering Flood,* 1897, etc. He died in 1896. *Collected Works,* ed. by May Morris, 24 vols., 1910, etc. Cheap editions of most of his works are obtainable. See the biographies or studies by Mackail (*Life of William Morris,* 1899; *William Morris and His Circle,* 1907); Vallance, 1897; Clutton-Brock (*William Morris, His Work and Influence,* 1897); Drinkwater (*William Morris, a Critical Study,* 1912); Rickett, 1913; Vidalenc (in *Art et Esthétique,* Paris, F. Alcan, 1920).

For this reason it is that his most dramatic pictures convey the impression of remoteness from actuality. In *The Earthly Paradise* he almost created a masterpiece. He gave the succession of the months and the changing temper of the year as a background to twenty-four tales, twelve of which are taken from antiquity and twelve from the Middle Ages. These with their interludes compose a very harmonious and delightful poem; but something is wanting in it: the direct appeal of the emotion to the heart. It remains remote from human nature; passion, suffering and conflict are seen as through a strange haze which dims the perspective of everything, and clothes the whole in a glow as soft as that which lights us in our dreams. Such a realm as this is not one where the keenest and deepest inspiration can exist. The narrative art just as the charm of description is here employed solely as the instrument of a general suggestion, to which the poet's instinctive skill is untiringly applied, and which belongs, here again, to the category of Symbolism. The material world vanishes, to be replaced by a vision of beauty composed of joy and sadness; the whole thing is artificial, although the setting is that of nature; its contours may be definite enough, but the atmosphere is mysterious and misty. This magic touch of the modern impressionist in Morris sets his tales in a totally different sphere from that of Chaucer.

Thus the genius of Morris has its vein of morbidity as well. On the other hand, he has a liking for robust simplicity, and for the naïvety of primitive souls, which accounts for his being so greatly influenced by Germanic and Scandinavian mythology; in them he found as it were a complementary pole to his temperament. Instead of the over-refinement strung to a keen pitch of nervous intensity, and fused with all the ardour of the South, which he found in Pre-Raphaelitism, this Northern literature revealed to Morris a warlike savagery, violent passions and a strong but rough imagination. By obeying the dictates of his instinct in its search for compensation, he satisfied a considerable part of his moral self; namely the affinity and sympathy he felt for Anglo-Saxon tradition and the spirit of the North. His journey to Iceland, his discovery of a new and imposing aspect of nature in its wild grandeur, the thrilling emotion he experienced at finding himself in the home of his forefathers, are the beginning of a decisive stage in his moral development. But even in this new domain he cannot be other than the æsthete, imbued to the core with Latin culture. As before in his preferential quest of mediæval art, it is the need for refinement that leads him to the ages and times of primitive man. He cannot continue to regard the material of his discovery as barbarian; he has to idealize it, to envelop it in a suffused, dreamlike colouring as his other visions, so that, while much of the original crudity is preserved, its harsher aspects are veiled to a large extent.

This new orientation is not without some resultant gain. Through it Morris can now illustrate the fulfilment of destiny with the larger vision of epic greatness; he can introduce the dramatic element; he can make the issue depend upon the struggle of the individual, and in this way supply what was lacking in the too fatalistic atmosphere of his other works. "The Lovers of Gudrun" is the most animated of the episodes in *The Earthly Paradise;* the study of the sagas, leaving aside mere translations, in *The Story of Sigurd the Volsung and the Fall of the Niblungs,* suggested to him an epic which is at once a free imitation and, in certain respects, an original work. In it one feels a different inspiration; the vistas that open over rustling forests or the sea reveal a world in all the freshness of its spring; the keener Northern air replaces the feverish languorous atmosphere of the South. Themes familiar to the reader of to-day are treated here with skilful fidelity; the wilder elements are allowed to come to the fore, but are discreetly interpreted. The language, noble without affectation, jars in no way with the Germanic character of the legend, because the poet has shown a decided preference for Saxon words, and made a frequent use of composite terms, archaic phrases and expressions, which for the most part are successful. But the real merit of the form is to be found in the rhythm, in the rhyming anapæstic couplets of six accents; this regular cadence, supple, unrestrained, and marvellously springy, gives the story its fascination, and almost eliminates the danger of monotony in its somewhat long development.

The love of adventure, the attraction of an imaginary world, where beautiful human lives bloom out in open nature and unrestricted liberty, where unhappiness, suffering and death have themselves a dignity unknown in our industrial civilization, have inspired the romancer as much as the poet in Morris. Or rather we may say that the novels of his later years are poems in prose, simple in style and yet musical. The charm in great part springs from their indefiniteness; their remote atmosphere soothes the aching of a mind galled by the tyranny of a vulgar present.

It is also the reaction of a wounded sensibility against the ugliness of the real that has stimulated the apostolic teaching of the socialist in Morris. He actively put his beliefs to practice, and gave the best proof of their sincerity; they withstood the trial of time, the jeers of scepticism, the mediocrity or narrow-mindedness of many of the people with whom they brought him into contact. His experience in this connection was decisive, for he found in his faith a satisfaction too deeply based upon the conception of justice and the love of humanity, to allow of any disillusionment. *A Dream of John Ball* is a brief evocation of the obscure suffering of mankind in the past, of the fruitful ferment of revolt, of the progress which would make a better order of things possible, of the gap which still separates us from the fulfilment of this ideal, and of the necessary effort required to attain to it. The work is written in a language of moving racy appeal, which lends beauty to the generous note of fraternal sympathy, as well as to the bitterness of a courageous political criticism. *News from Nowhere* is the most enchanting of Utopias; the one which keeps farthest removed from material means of realization, and from the genesis of the new world. With the unerring touch made possible only through the vision of a poet, it shows us the fulfilment of our best hopes and purest wishes, of the fondest and oldest dreams of mankind. And this ideal state seems quite within our reach, in all its concreteness, with its passion that knows no cruelty, and its griefs that are without the sting of bitterness; with its religion of happiness and brotherly sympathy, its peace of the mind, cured of all yearning for another world, in the calm and ever beautiful scenery of the earth transformed into a free natural garden. No English prose-writer has ever used a simpler and more captivating language. No book would be better suited to calm the feverish torments of the mind, if, in this kingdom of the possible, greater attention were sometimes paid to our very disquietude, our longing for improvement, our eternal need of change and inquiry.

While the literary activities of Morris are vast, they form only one part of his life's work. Much of his strength was employed in another sphere, where his noble ideals in art came into contact with the resistance of matter. He was a decorative painter in stained glass, in tapestry, in cloth, in paper-hangings; he founded a printing establishment, from the presses of which have come many beautiful works of art; and by degrees he slowly brought about a renovation in the decorative art both of England and of the Continent. Of one mind with Ruskin, but more active and less of a dreamer, he has propounded the principles and given the example of a conscientious technique, and a true inspiration, open at once to the present and its newest teaching, and to those unduly neglected lessons of the mediæval artists. In the designing of furniture as of ornaments, and the general setting of the domestic interior, he has been the chief individual source of a European transformation. The various recent attempts to associate harmoniously the social factors in industry owe much to the energetic encouragement of Morris. He is not only a poet and an artist, but an apostle of many activities, untiring in effort, rich in accomplishments.

5. Christina Rossetti; Coventry Patmore; Mrs. Browning.—In Christina Rossetti[1] we have a personality, retiring and meditative, wrapped up in the modesty of feminine feelings and religious austerity. Her work is to be found scattered in a host of fragmentary poems, which represent momentary effusions in the life of her soul; she seeks to conceal rather than reveal herself, and leaves it thus to the reader to penetrate beneath the surface of her verse. Her work as a whole will scarcely be lasting; it has dry pages; yet there is in it an abundance of the freshest flowers, modest perhaps, but of a delicate perfume, and which, once breathed, will haunt the memory of the reader.

She belongs to a tradition, however; her poetry pulsates with the spirit of impassioned Romanticism. But a veil of feminine reserve and of piety interposes itself between her heart and her words. The interest of her life is centred in religion; she is swayed by earnest moral thoughts, and by an ardent, though almost familiar, mysticism, which brings with it no mental disturbance. Despite the predominance of faith in her inspiration, her best pages are not those devoted to sacred themes. There is something too orthodox and sober in her devotion to inspire a poetry of great personality. Her continual meditation on death—a subject after her own heart—brings into her work a monotonous note, but it is of wider appeal.

The inner life of which we thus catch a glimpse is that of a proud, passionate, pure soul, which has experienced every emotion, even that of earthly love, but which has never entirely yielded itself to any; a soul which, if it finds contentment in Divine love, does not wish to give too great expression to its joy, so much is asceticism a part of its nature. Sensitive in disposition, however, responsive to the influences of seasons and circumstances, she lends herself to the emotions of her joyless life, and expresses them in verse of crystalline purity, whose musical sonority is clear, though a trifle thin.

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[1] Christina Rossetti, younger sister of Dante Gabriel, born in London, 1830, lived with her mother in uneventful retirement, wrapped up in spiritual contemplation. She declined two offers of marriage on account of religious motives. At the age of eleven she already displayed her poetic gifts; her *Verses* (privately circulated) were printed in 1847; she collaborated in *The Germ* (1850); published *Goblin Market and Other Poems*, 1862; *The Prince's Progress and Other Poems*, 1866; *A Pageant and Other Poems*, 1881, etc.; critical articles, stories and tales, devotional works; *New Poems*, 1896, were published after her death in 1894. *Political Works*, ed. by W. M. Rossetti, 1904; *Poems* (selected), ed. idem, Golden Treasury Series, 1904. See *Family Letters*, 1908; biography and study by Bell, 1898; A. Symons (*Studies in Two Literatures*), 1897; Westcott, 1899.

The most substantial of her poems are allegories in which we watch a curiously imaginative mind at work, weaving out of an exclusively psychological sensuality an exuberance of description, and toning down the passionate element to innocent caresses, whilst the conscience secretly astir is preoccupied with moral ends, and interprets itself by a kind of gracious symbolism. *Goblin Market* is a delightful fairy tale. The charm of a childish invention, and the gay spirit which animates this airy fantasy, serve to conceal a theme of graver import: the dread of sensual folly, and the severity inherent to a doctrine of sacrifice and renunciation.

In this early work, it is manifest that Christina Rossetti still takes pleasure in the quality of the form she employs; she delights in verbal profusion, and the skilful use of metre. But her art very soon avoids anything that might suggest the painstaking effort of the stylist, while her lyrical gifts are more and more concentrated upon using the most simple means. Her delicate and shifting impressions are conveyed in a language of easy flow, and develop with the semblance of absolute spontaneity. The vigorous note, the accentuated tone are rare, or scarcely perceptible; and yet the rhythm and the melody of the words are powerfully expressive. Many of these effusions, in their sweetness and direct sincerity, have an undernote of grief which would recall the touch of Verlaine, had not the poetess been careful to restrain and curb the elements of morbid melancholy and regret, as soon as these tend to appear. Their momentary presence, however, leaves a tremor rippling over the smooth and limpid surface of her style. This pure form of poetry permits of artistic elegance in only one sense—that of the naturally varied prosodiacal measure. The sonnets, of too easy and flowing a nature to possess any strong structural beauty, are nevertheless attractive by their soft colouring and elegiac tenderness. It is to her nobility of soul, which never seeks to abuse a natural gift of eloquence, nor overstep the truth of her inspired fervour, that Christina Rossetti owes the dignity and charm of her literary personality.

It is also the religious sentiment that gives unity to the figure of Coventry Patmore.[1] From an early age, he developed a tendency to spiritual refinement, and associated it to the theme of conjugal love; once converted to Roman Catholicism, he tended in his last works towards the fullness of visionary mysticism. Above all he is the poet of the domestic idyll, of marriage sanctified by tenderness, and no less by due respect to the more external demands of society; where the harmony of hearts rules supreme, but where tradition also plays its part. As Tennyson had shown, no theme comes nearer to expressing certain deep-rooted desires of the modern English soul, or its resolution to beautify with pious reverence the emotions and episodes which lead to the union of two lives. The subject of betrothal and marriage had been coloured by the Victorian public with a kind of complacent sentimentalism, in which certain national preferences came to the fore. The intimate pictures drawn by Patmore have a grace both warm and voluptuous, beneath their somewhat conventional respectability. In the flights of his imagination, he combines an ardour and an eagerness which can transfigure the realities of the home; but such flights are regrettably short. His diction shows delicacy, and his verse is skilfully adapted to subjects sometimes of the simplest order; but he does not always avoid a false elegance of style, a prosaic form of expression, the abuse of broken cadences; in trying to weave a poetic halo round the familiar aspects of middle-class life, he has been courageous enough, but too often his talent cannot rise above the mediocre atmosphere of his subject. One might single out as his best work the purely lyrical poems—the odes, which are decidedly less popular, and somewhat laboured, but which open wide horizons, show a wonderful wealth of rhythmic devices, and continue the traditions of the great English visionaries.

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[1] Coventry Patmore (1823–96); librarian at the British Museum; *Poems*, 1844; *The Angel in the House* (I., *The Betrothal*; II., *The Espousals*), 1854–56; *The Unknown Eros and Other Odes*, 1877. *Poems*, ed. by Champneys, 1906; *The Angel*, etc., introd. by Mrs. Meynell, 1905. See biography and correspondence, by Champneys, 1901; studies by Gosse, 1905; Burdett, 1921.

The early work of Mrs. Browning[1] did not give promise of a great poetess. In her first manner she shows a docile nature, trying to find itself, remembering, imitating much. For antiquity and for Greece she displays a youthful enthusiasm; she is decidedly fond of all that savours of the didatic; and thus her verse tends towards a kind of belated pseudo-classicism, in which are mingled the influences of Pope, Byron and Campbell. *The Battle of Marathon* and *An Essay on Mind* are little else than the first attempts of a zealous schoolgirl, who is still under the spell of eighteenth-century diction, rhetoric and rhythm. But her temperament had in it the germs of a sincere romanticism of the emotions, which grew by degrees; and imitation had its share in this development, but her own spontaneity is felt in it as well. Here and there we catch a personal note or a salient trait. Her mystical dramas, *The Seraphim* and *A Drama of Exile,* are still full of suggestions too passively accepted; Byron and Moore she lays to contribution, and even Shelley, from whom she naïvely copies her spirit choirs. Yet such works have a power that cannot be mistaken. In places she displays the sublime beauty of biblical imagination.

It is by the poetry of feeling and vision that Mrs. Browning comes finally to find herself. No doubt influences can still be traced in the development of her personality. After an interval of twenty years, she takes up again the themes of the preceding generation. The series of her lyrical pieces group themselves first of all round the Middle Ages, and here her model is Coleridge rather than Shelley or Keats. In *The Romaunt of Margret, Isobel's Child,* the *Rhyme of the Duchess May,* the effects of mysterious atmosphere and tragic passion are handled with talent; but the archaism is artificial, the rhythm is laboured, and the felicity of form ever of short duration. In these poems there are only the elements of an original personality, traceable in various evocations, landscape sketches, and mere episodes.

When she comes to deal with subjects relating to her own time, which encourage, as it were, an immediate outpouring of the self, the talent of Mrs. Browning is at last wholly liberated. Then, her forcefulness, the inner flame of her imagination, can mould and adapt to her purpose even the most rebellious elements in vocabulary, and pour themselves forth in verse as yet uneven, but radiating with soft or powerful gleams of beauty. Her lyricism possesses a remarkable quality of suggestion; quick bird's-eye views, bold and new images, a divining sense of the subtle analogies which link up matter and soul. Her pictures of nature show a keen intensity, an eloquent, startling concentration. At the same time this Romanticism, essential to her nature, is soaked in intellectuality. For the literary ideal she sets herself is still didactic, oratorical and erudite. Possessing such mixed tendencies, it is no wonder that she should find herself perfectly adapted to the atmosphere of the Victorian age. She does not need to impose herself upon the public; her great success is fairly immediate. Yet her lyrical poems are marred by a persistent vein of scholarly allusions, of abstract or forced language, and of jarring verse, which, running through the very core of her poetry, crops up all too often, and allows itself but too rarely to be forgotten.

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[1] Elizabeth Barrett, born in 1806 in the north of England, the daughter of a rich landowner, studied the ancient classics, began writing at an early age and made her first venture in 1819 in an epic poem: *The Battle of Marathon;* published *An Essay on Mind and Other Poems* (anon.), 1826; a translation of Æschylus: *Prometheus Bound,* 1835; *The Seraphim and Other Poems,* 1838. Of delicate constitution, she lived the life of a recluse in London, contributing to periodicals certain poems, a collection of which (*A Drama of Exile,* 1845) brought her fame. In 1845 she met Robert Browning, married him in 1846 in spite of her father's opposition, and spent the greater part of her married life in Italy. She published *Sonnets from the Portuguese,* 1847; *Casa Guidi Windows,* 1851; *Aurora Leigh,* 1857; *Poems before Congress,* 1860. She died in 1861; her last works appeared in 1862. *Complete Poems,* 1904; *Poetical Works,* Oxford ed., 1910; *Aurora Leigh,* ed. by Forman, 1899. *The Love Letters of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning* were published in 1899 (2 vols.). See biographies or studies by Ingram (Eminent Women series), 1888; Montégut (*Écr. mod. d'Angleterre,* 2nd series, 1883); Merlette (*Vie et œuvre de Elizabeth Browning*), 1906; Madame Nicati (*Elizabeth Browning femme et poète*), 1912; Texte (*Études de litt. europ.*), 1898; N. A. Bald (*Women Writers of the Nineteenth Century*), 1923.

Her poetry therefore finds its purest effusion in those moments of surrender to emotion or unrestrained passion, when feeling at its strongest exclusively directs and creates the song of the soul. To such moments belong elegies of instantaneous indignation, as *The Cry of the Children,* or of grieved sympathy, as *Cowper's Grave;* above all, the admirable series of *Sonnets from the Portuguese,* where an ecstatic love, at once grateful and still penetrated by the thought of death, blossoms out into mystic adoration, in one of the finest offertories which have ever given utterance to a soul bestowing itself unreservedly.

The most important work from the pen of Mrs. Browning, *Aurora Leigh,* presents a problem that is ever new: the conflict in verse-writing between independence of thought on the one hand, and the demands of form on the other. This philosophical novel develops with a force, and an impatience of all verbal restraint, which in a sense are justified by the warmth of the inspiration, and by the life of a mind to which all crises appeal, whether those of the social order or of modern faith. There is in it a feeling of the inner tragedies of the soul, rich and deep enough to give rise to genuine moral pathos and moving sublimity. Besides, the writer's imagination does not remain dormant; it spreads over the events, and even over the reflections which often interrupt their course, the breath of nature, in the charm of its rugged or softened aspects. Even the freedom of the blank verse contributes happily to the varied movement of the tale, as it passes on from the things of everyday life to the heights of a glowing idealism. But the texture of the work is not woven closely enough; its constituent elements lack coherence and fusion; there is too much dross in it, too many prosaisms, lapses into the commonplace, unfortunate liberties in the phrasing; and the measure, swept along with overfeverish haste, on its way, unconcernedly, goes through long stretches of dry and rough ground. What might have been one of the great poems in the English language remains but the noble and enticing confession of a poetess with a generous heart. For this reason, and with due regard to some pages of unblemished beauty, the work will probably survive the exaggerated contempt which its undeniable faults have called down upon it in our day.

6. Bailey; Clough; Matthew Arnold; FitzGerald.—At the same time as Victorian poetry draws much of its inspiration from an ever-flourishing Romanticism, it can also lay claim to a type of verse the central motive of which is rather intellectual. This age was engrossed in the preoccupation of the ultimate problems of life. *In Memoriam* and *Aurora Leigh* reveal the influence of general themes on temperaments such as those of Tennyson and Mrs. Browning, whose spontaneous reaction to facts and ideas was ruled by the exigencies of sensibility. In the case of other writers, the seeds of philosophical poetry fall on yet better prepared ground; with them, it becomes an all-absorbing inspiration, and tends to organize round ideas all the work of literary invention and expression.

In this respect Bailey[1] is a transitional poet, for a feverish Romanticism fans into a glow the metaphysical musings of his *Festus*.

Although this work was planned independently, it nevertheless reflects the genius of Goethe, whom Bailey intended to surpass by penetrating still farther into the subject of *Faust*, and introducing into it all the ardent humanitarian optimism of the modern religious conscience. The effort is noble, but the writer is sadly unequal to the task which his ambitious hope has set before him. There is too great a contrast between his abrupt and riotous art, and the serenity of Goethe, for the reader to be able to forget it. *Festus* is not, however, mere pretension; at times, an Elizabethan fury enlivens the heaviness of an argumentative theology; lines of great beauty, flights of the imagination, suddenly bear off the reader to sublime heights; but the fall is only more terrible when he crashes back upon the uneven ground of Puritan argument, and into the dreadful monotony of Bailey's blank verse. Despite its obscurity, the poet's thought may not be lacking in breadth of outlook; but the form in which he clothes it, with all its naïvety, its clumsiness, its prosaism, is totally unacceptable. Only a public with little critical judgment could accept the one for the sake of the other.[2]

It is in a very different tonality that the philosophic poetry of Clough and Arnold attempts to perform the miraculous feat of reconciling passion with clear thinking into a short-lived union.

With Clough[3] one must admit that the attempt is unsuccessful. He is one of those writers who solicit the reader's sympathy by the power of a sincere and lofty thought, but as an artist he is incomplete. The fact that his work remains the cult of a discreet and restricted circle of admirers, shows how great an appeal can be made to the English mind by strength of character and the frank discussion of moral problems. To those consciences which are free from prejudice but not from uneasiness he speaks in a somewhat austere, but direct language; and it is enough.

The work of Clough supplies, as it were, an historical document in the progress of ideas. His is the generation which receives the full shock of the new religious doubts. Attracted for a brief spell by Newman's group, Clough reasserts his individuality and turns towards the "Broad Church." His faith sweeps away all dogma, and centres its belief in the recognition of duty and in the intuition of the Divine. Such is the source of that spontaneous gladness of soul, that sane outlook, so courageous and infectious; to his inner candour, and to the doubts which remain part of his nature, he owes, however, a tenor

[1] Philip James Bailey (1816–1902), at the age of twenty wrote a philosophic epic, *Festus* (published anon., 1839), which had a great success. His other works met with an indifferent reception (*The Angel World*, 1850; *The Mystic*, 1855, etc.). *Festus*, revised on several occasions by the author, was reprinted in 1893, etc. See biographical study by Ward, 1905.

[2] *The Mystic* is quite unreadable and lapses into mere literary pathology.—Interesting studies, besides that of Bailey, are to be found in the "Spasmodic" poetry of Sydney Thompson Dobell (1824–74; *Balder*, 1854); in the verse of Alexander Smith (1830–67; *A Life Drama*, 1853, etc.); and in the epic poem of Richard Hengist Horne (1803–84), *Orion* (1843), where the thought is difficult to understand but rich, the form at times brilliant (other works: *Cosmo de Medici, The Death of Marlowe*, dramas, 1837; *A New Spirit of the Age*, social studies, 1844, etc.).

[3] Arthur Hugh Clough, born in 1819 in Liverpool, the son of a merchant, studied at Rugby under Thomas Arnold, and later at Oxford; was influenced by Newman, then turned towards a faith of free religious principles. He occupied several university posts, travelled on the Continent, and died in Florence in 1856, after having published: *The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich*, 1848; *Amours de Voyage*, 1849; *Dipsychus*, 1850. *Poems and Prose Remains*, etc., ed. by his wife, 1869; *Poems*, ed. by Milford, 1910; ed. by Whibley, 1913. See studies by Waddington, 1882; Lutonsky, 1912; Stopford Brooke (*Clough*, etc.), 1913; Guyot (*Essai sur la formation philosophique du poète A. H. Clough*), 1913; J. I. Osborne, 1920.

of soul more responsively human, and more flexibly supple. It cannot be said that he never knew the peace of the mind, but it is also true that he never ceased to seek it. Through these two traits he remains a kindred spirit to those anxious devotees of truth, worshippers of action as well, for whom action is both the aim and the measure of truth.

The longest poems of Clough are not his best. The *Amours de Voyage* is a very prosaic novel in verse. In *Dipsychus* we have a work of strange conception, of substance and interest, where the author deals with problems which are never out of date. No one in England has expressed more clearly than Clough the essential hesitation in modern thought, nor the conflict between the intellectualism of pure philosophy, and the ever ready adaptation which is the law of practical life. Here, again, there is the suspicion of a certain parallelism with the subject of *Faust*, but it keeps within acceptable limits. In a series of episodes, the meaning of which appears clearly enough, the progress of a conscience to a state of mature wisdom which will save its dignity, though allowing of compromise in action, is shown in a way both strong and subtle. But the dialogue is too simple and at the same time too laboured; it lacks the sparkle of symbolic imagination, or the artistic concentration, which might have created an impression of beauty.

The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich, like the *Amours de Voyage,* is written in hexameters of uneven flow, and resembles too often the style of a conversation with the feeblest attempt at cadence. Yet it is in this work that Clough gives most successfully his original note as a poet—in the animation, the gaiety, the humour of the narrative; in a freshness and a virginal purity of soul, which, allied to the strong and moving impressiveness of the Scottish setting, re-create the true note and atmosphere of the classical idyll, despite the novelty of a different scenery. The love of nature is, with Clough as with many others, the emotion which fired and spiritualized a style otherwise clumsy, and allowed a halting inspiration to soar. Several of the shorter poems, in the form of confessions and effusions, have also this redeeming grace; their language is one of music and imagery, where the nobleness of the ideas is worthily expressed in verse at once sedate and beautiful.

With Matthew Arnold[1] beauty was more consciously the object of a desire and a cult. He had the fine sensibility of the scholar, and his mind was deeply impregnated with all the teaching of ancient art. His imagination fondly dwelt upon Greek scenes and times; under the direct influence of Hellenism, he formed an ideal of sober and pure simplicity, and made it the constant model of his style. With this purity, Arnold combined the serious note of deep reflection which was his as well. His poetry bears the stamp of intellectualism; and no writer better represents the new character of the Victorian age, in its contrast with the Romantic period. Arnold was well aware of what set him apart from Byron and Shelley, and expressed it himself. Did not their impassioned verse betray too keenly the emotion which fired their hearts? In Arnold's days the poet has acquired a certain modesty and reserve; he can now modulate his voice and discipline his song, while his intelligence like a prism refracts and modifies his passion. To him the wild disorder of Romanticism should be replaced by a clear architecture, the design of which should be borrowed from the classical writers, those masters of a supreme sense of balance.

At once a poet and a philosopher, he thus wanted his work to be moulded after a strong traditional fashion. With the Greeks—Sophocles, Homer and Epictetus—the guides he chose are among the calmest of the recent prophets: Wordsworth, who built up and willed his moral life; Obermann, sorrowful but stoical in his despair. These combined influences, acting upon a temperament more gifted in criticism than in creation, stimulated him to flights of poetry clearly thought out and full of substance, condensed in carefully selected words, and swayed by an exacting sense of accuracy and fitness.

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[1] For the life, etc., of Matthew Arnold, see above, Book VI. chap. ii. sect. 5.

The poetical work of Arnold is not absolutely in the front rank of English literature. It has the somewhat cold temper of a well-calculated impulse to write, and very seldom does it suggest an inevitable effusion. But in the order of philosophical poetry it occupies a prominent place, though it does not owe it to its most ambitious efforts, or its clearest intentions.

A great part of this work may be classed as only estimable and refined, but slightly artificial; it is that which the scruples of the humanist or the thinker deprived of all warm emotion. Many of the shorter poems of moral analysis are simply dissertations in verse; they have elegance and precision, but their sobriety is bought at the price of a prosy dryness. The rhythm is too often awkward. More ornate, and attempting at times to reach the sublimity of grand style, are the poems which Arnold conceived and wrote when under the exclusive influence of Classicism; but these poems are not the best. His humanistic studies offer a source of sincere inspiration, to which can be traced not only his careful discrimination in language, his delicate evocations, and all that background of imagery and allusion of so eloquent an appeal to the cultured reader, but also the preference—which grew to be instinctive—for subjects, comparisons and a tonality far removed from the immediate facts of everyday life. Passing into this sphere of scholarly art, the need for poetic expression loses its animating force by losing the sense of unadulterated truth; it adapts itself to tricks, and indirect methods of realization. Despite their solid merits, Arnold's epic, tragic or mythological poems have lost the prestige which lately enshrouded them. A spark of genius lights up only from time to time the pages of *The Strayed Reveller, Empedocles on Etna, Merope, Sohrab and Rustum, The Sick King in Bokhara.* A poem such as *Empedocles,* the faults of which were only too apparent to Arnold, offers a keener interest because it deals more closely with the ever-pressing problems of thought, and thus makes up for what it lacks in musical quality.

The irony of fate has decreed that Arnold's verse shall continue to be read because of its inner Romanticism, which precisely was what the poet sternly tried to repress. A repression, no doubt, which nevertheless bore fruit, and which adds a dignity to his more discreet avowals; an inevitable repression as well, which would never have been tolerated by one of greater lyrical genius, and of a more ardent inspiration. The fact remains that the most lasting beauties of this work, which is above all conscious, are just those which the poet himself did not reach of set purpose.

The true note of Arnold's temperament is sadness; a pensive melancholy, essentially Romantic in origin, which gains sterner tones from the more definite anxieties of the century, now more sedate and mature. Here again, as in the case of Clough, we find the uneasiness of a soul torn between meditation and strong self-possession on the one hand, and on the other, the claims of action; but with Arnold there is above all the feeling of a wound, the loss of the cheerful temper which Clough owed to the possession of a satisfying faith. The vague Christianity of Arnold, the moral pantheism to which all his philosophical reflection tends, seems to have left in his inner self an emptiness, a scar which is revealed only in his poetry. The loss of all positive belief came as a momentous experience to him as to many of his generation, and hopelessly destroyed all his joy of life. We thus catch a first glimpse of the pessimism of an age, suspended in uncertainty between a world which has passed out of existence, and one which is not yet formed; and this pessimism is destined slowly to spread and colour the last years of the century. Arnold is one of the forerunners of what will prove to be a contagious movement, in the province of letters as well as in that of feeling.

And it is the presence of this metaphysical or religious anguish which gives the note of eloquence to the most moving of his poems. In *Dover Beach* it is clearly perceptible; in *Thyrsis* it is hidden, and mixed with the regret awakened by the death of a friend; while in *The Forsaken Merman* it becomes still more elusive, undistinguishable from a fanciful elegiac spirit. From the same source comes the poignant note that is occasionally felt in the stanzas inspired by the Grande-Chartreuse, or by the memory of Sénancour. And when, in *The Scholar Gipsy,* the great modern melancholy is broadened and spiritualized into a symbol of mystery and dreams, the poetry of Arnold strikes its most original and its highest note.

By a coincidence natural enough, the sincerity of the theme brings to their greatest degree of efficiency the gifts of invention and fastidious choice which impart its rare quality to the art of Arnold. The delicate achievements of his classical talent give a felicitous, an easy and graceful expression to the confession of his incurable nostalgia. His feeling for nature is rich with suggestions, refined by the influence of sober Greek landscape; it is almost always associated with the emotion of the past, the keen intuitive sense of the flight of time; and the forests, the rocks of the Alpine heights, the noble meadow-lands or the mystic sunsets seen in the neighbourhood of Oxford, are coloured in his poetry with the indefinable pathos which only memory and the fleeting quality of things can inspire.

These short poems come very near to what might be perfection in philosophical poetry. Their rhythm shows a careful and yet not over-elaborate construction, and there is in them sureness of touch, along with an Attic elegance in style through which runs a modern vein of more intense suggestion. They captivate the mind of the reader with their powerful manifold charm; for the inherent value of the idea is brought out by a wealth of artistry, in which the magic force of the words, the fascination of the images, the soft suffused glow which lights the whole, unite in one harmonious accord.

FitzGerald[1] is a lover of solitude and mystery, a dreamer whose thoughts are discreetly coloured by visions both gloomy and voluptuous. He resembles no one, but, if a comparison were hazarded, it might be said that he would find a place not far from Matthew Arnold. His poem, essentially pessimistic, intellectual, and calmly pathetic, combines an imaginative Romanticism with the discipline of a sober form. By a unique stroke of fortune, the translation of the mediæval, Persian quatrains, modernized with bold yet delicate skill, moulded and arranged in a personal way, expresses the innermost soul and subtlest essence of nineteenth-century melancholy, which, acquiring thus the depth of a far-distant past, seems to spread as well over the whole human destiny. The oriental colour of the setting, exact and yet toned down, together with the inspiring power of the rhythm, is a miracle of refined literary adaptation; and the art which has formed and condensed each pearl in this poetic necklace, which has also polished them and added to their grace the rich lustre of thought, is not unworthy of being compared with that of the greatest artists.

7. **Robert Browning.**—The work of Robert Browning[2] fully exemplifies

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[1] Edward FitzGerald (1809–83) led the life of an indolent, refined lover of literature; published a dialogue in prose, *Euphranor,* 1851; a translation of Calderón, 1853; rendered a Persian poem into English verse (*Salaman and Absal,* 1856); and combined in a free poetic version the quatrains of the Persian poet, Omar Khayyám (*The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyám,* 1st ed., 1859; three later editions of this were considerably revised). At first unnoticed, then hailed as a masterpiece, this slender volume has never lost its popularity. See *Rubaiyat,* ed. by Dole, 1898; ed. by Heron-Allen, 1908; French translations by Nicolas, 1867, Henry, 1903, Grolleau, 1917, etc.; *Letters and Literary Remains of Edward FitzGerald,* ed. by A. Wright, 1903; study by Benson (English Men of Letters), 1905.

[2] Robert Browning, born in 1812 in London, the son of a banker and of a mother of half-German, half-Scottish descent, was educated at home, and at an early age wrote verse, publishing anonymously in 1833 a poem entitled *Pauline;* then *Paracelsus,* 1835; *Sordello,*

one of the dominant tendencies of Victorian poetry, and probably the more important one, because it comes nearer to expressing the originality of the period: the craving for analysis and moral criticism. Browning's art is entirely pervaded by intellectual curiosity, and almost merged in the systematic quest of truth; it is parted from what is essential in pure science only by secondary intentions. The poet in whom this age was longest in recognizing itself is the one who best answered, not as Tennyson to its easier and emotional genius, but to its intense desire for rationality in religious beliefs and in life.

He began by deeply receiving the influences of Romanticism; Shelley was to him a divine model. But very soon, the ardour of imagination and feeling was invested in him with a new intensity—the exalted consciousness of self, which develops into a penetrating, insisting and complex psychological reflection, and finally becomes a philosophy, a direct analysis of the working of the mind, not viewed in its concrete quality, as with Wordsworth, but reduced to an interplay of ideas. One cannot say that *Pauline* is a lyrical effusion; it is rather the strange confession of a writer who makes the state of his romantic soul the object of his study. In *Paracelsus* we have the tumultuous and superabundant outpouring of a doctrine which, grown impatient of all restraint, tries to express itself fully; it seethes within the drama of a single life. In this work, the personality of Browning is seen to be already formed; but the exuberance of youth is still perceptible in the more spontaneous flight of the imagination, in the full and cadenced notes, bearing the traces of an eloquent and musical ideal which he will abandon from now onwards. His original features will become more and more prominent, but he will never again show more truly his poetical genius.

In *Sordello,* the last of these early attempts, we find such a strong reaction against the survival of a rhetoric which no longer answers the intentions of the poet, such a decided assertion of a new style, the outcome of his original temperament, that the balance of the whole is destroyed; so much is implied, alluded to, or left to the understanding of the reader, that the expression becomes overcharged and burdened, and the language loses its æsthetic quality by developing over-much its value as an intellectual sign. This work cannot be called a poem; rather it is a confused series of invitations to probe and penetrate the subtleties

1840; he also essayed drama, of which *Stafford* appeared in 1837. Many lyric and dramatic pieces (*Pippa Passes,* 1841; *King Victor and King Charles,* 1842; *Dramatic Lyrics,* 1842; *The Return of the Druses,* 1843; *A Blot on the 'Scutcheon,* 1843; *Colombe's Birthday,* 1844; *Dramatic Romances,* 1845; *Luria, A Soul's Tragedy,* 1846, etc.) appeared in series, and were collected in 1847 under the title of *Bells and Pomegranates.* After his marriage with Miss Barrett (1846) he resided for the most part in Italy. *Christmas Eve and Easter Day* appeared in 1850; *Men and Women* in 1855. The continued indifference on the part of the public, and the death of his wife in 1861, would explain a period of retirement, from which he emerged in 1864 with *Dramatis Personæ,* and more important still *The Ring and the Book* (1868–69). From then onwards he was recognized by a wide élite and was the recipient of national honours. He published numerous poems and collections of verse: *Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau,* 1871; *Fifine at the Fair,* 1872; *The Inn Album,* 1875; *Pacchiarotto,* 1876; *La Saisiaz,* 1878; *Dramatic Idylls,* 1879–80; *Ferishtah's Fancies,* 1884; *Asolando,* 1889. He died at Venice in 1889 and was buried in Westminster Abbey. *Poetical Works,* ed. by Birrell, 2 vols., 1898; *Complete Works,* ed. by Porter and Clarke, 1898; *Poems,* Oxford ed., 1905; *Works,* Centenary ed., 1912, etc.; *Sordello,* ed. by Whyte, 1913; *The Ring and the Book,* ed. by Dowden, 1912; *Essay on Shelley,* ed. by Garnett, 1914. See the biographies or studies by Symons (*Introduction to the Study of Browning*), 1886; new ed., 1906; Sarrazin (*Poètes mod. d'Angleterre*), 1888; Sharp (Great Writers), 1890; Jones (*Browning as a Philosophic and Religious Teacher*), 1891; Brooke (*Poetry of Robert Browning*), 1902; Mrs. Orr (*A Handbook to the Works of Robert Browning*), 1902; Dowden (*Life of Robert Browning*), 1904; Herford (Modern English Writers), 1905; Chesterton (English Men of Letters), 1908; Berger (*Quelques aspects de la Foi moderne dans les poèmes de Robert Browning*), 1907; idem (*"Robert Browning": Grands écrivains étrangers*), 1912; Griffin and Minchin (*Life of Robert Browning*), 1910; Lounsbury (*Early Literary Career of Browning*), 1912; Phelps (*Browning, How to Know Him*), 1915.

of the writer's mind. A thesis is unfolded by means of a symbolical tale, which under the mesh-work of so many abstract relations comes to be almost lost to view.

Browning recognized, however, that he had gone too far. The work of his more mature years follows a middle course, without ceasing to be arduous and original. However varied and considerable it may be, it lends itself to a general study. From the scenic dramas which have been actually staged (*Strafford* in 1837; *A Blot on the 'Scutcheon,* 1843; *Colombe's Birthday,* 1853) to the lyric of personal effusion, of which there are several examples, by way of the plays too concentrated to be ever acted (as, for example, *Luria*), the dialogues and the different kinds of dramatic monologues, either separate (as *Dramatic Lyrics, Romances, Men and Women, Dramatis Personæ,* etc.), or grouped in series around a central theme (as in *The Ring and the Book*), there is one single method applied throughout, with a resolution which shows that the poet is sure of the resources at his command. His object, according to his own definition, is the study of incidents which go to compose the development of a soul. In his opinion there is little else that merits serious consideration.

Browning's typical form, that towards which all the other forms may be said to converge, is the monologue; there properly resides the newness of his art. His main idea is to throw light upon the realm of consciousness, and to do this he frees himself from all the shackles which impede psychological analysis, whether they are connected with action and narration, or the laws of material probability, and the various occasions when the external world in actual life obstructs and obscures that of the spirit. The novel and even the drama cannot but reserve an important, often a dominant place, for this element of circumstance. The psychologist finds full liberty only in the direct and individual expression of each being. The degree of clearness indispensable to this expression can be reached only through the actual hold which each personality has upon the states of its inner life. And as the psychologist's curiosity is infinite, Browning gives free vent to his imagination, roams through time and space, and selects in history and among the intense possibilities of life whatever cases attract him, either by their strong normality, or by virtue of their exceptional value; the common feature of all the characters chosen being the inherent complexity which they possess, and which they either realize themselves, or offer as a rich material to be exploited by the scrutinizing eye that can read them more clearly.

The fault of the method lies in this last point. It is very rarely that one can, or that one wants to probe deeply into one's own consciousness. The monologue of classical tragedy had already fallen into discredit because of its artificiality. This kind of thinking aloud, meant to explain for the spectator's benefit a simple feeling or the moral position of an actor at a given time in the play, did not correspond very well to the illusion which the drama intended to create. But at least there was no attempt in this to explore all the inner being. It only aimed at revealing the secret of a certain attitude, the course and result of deliberation, at communicating verbally a factor of the situation which the plot did not actually display on the stage. Now in the monologue of Browning, infinitely more adaptable, and free from the conventional atmosphere as well as from the dialectics imposed by tradition on orthodox tragedy, there is no less artificiality; indeed there is more. His ambition is very much greater; he wants to investigate the whole province of the soul, and the interplay of its reactions to the influence of environment; the actual drama is left out; with the result that our knowledge of the facts, of the conflict, and of the other characters, comes to us by way of one single voice; all the multiplicity of reality is seen from one unique angle of vision. For this formula in art to work, we must frankly leave aside the idea of likelihood, and of anything appertaining to concrete life.

We do not hear the spontaneous utterance of a living being; it is not the soliloquy of a soul that we suddenly come upon; it is rather a self-disclosure in which we have the collaboration of an analyst at work. The confession, if we may so term it, is guided by a purpose of explanation, interpretation and appreciation; and we do not feel that we have before us a human soul unwittingly revealing itself, but a psychologist who is dissecting and a moralist who is judging it.

However moving, therefore, these studies may be, they are not essentially dramatic. In objectivity their effort is only relative. No doubt Browning shows an exceptionally many-sided mind, and a remarkable gift of adaptation; he is well read, and his erudition allows him to give a precise colouring to whatever age or locality he may study. At the heart of his broad inquiry into the various species of mankind, there is present the same central motive which animates the *Légende des Siècles,* this review of the ages and civilizations that was the natural outcome of a century of criticism and history. But his work is not, nor does he wish it to be, an impartial mirror of reality. There is always some moral preoccupation in his psychology. If he is describing souls that are steeped in vice and in crime, he cannot repress a strong repugnance which breaks out in the words he lends them, and secretly shapes their discourses. His traitors stand out on a background in which one can read an implicit condemnation; his pages radiate impassioned preferences. His intellectuality and his doubts affect only the superficial part of his beliefs, or that which he regards as such. At the core there is an invincible, even aggressive belief in spirituality and soul; a doctrine of love as the touchstone of men, and the foundation of their real value. Before such problems as that of immortality, Browning evinces the desire to believe, rather than actual faith. But his thinking is essentially positive, and Christian without being orthodox. And so he has become the recognized guide, the master of all who seek rationality and at the same time a creed; not only is he the prophet of a liberal religion, but his poetry has been an instrument of grace.

Only intermittently is his verse a means of æsthetic enjoyment. Its supreme quality is of another order. Admitting the general artifice in his work, and the presence of the writer behind his characters, he affords his readers a keen intellectual pleasure. He speaks to the intelligence, or to the imagination in its highest form, that imagination which can effect syntheses, and group together related elements. With unlimited profusion, he gives us the joy of understanding and reconstructing characters; he makes us appreciate, better than any other writer of his time, the swarming variety of moral types. His portraits are admirable examples of penetration, strength and delicate colouring. He vigorously emphasizes the dominant features, and indicates detail with a minute understanding of the individual trait. The same felicity of touch is to be found in his treatment of problems and theses. The relativity of perceptions, the distinct and interfering waves which the shock of a single event sends surging through various minds (*The Ring and the Book*); the chance influences which at every instant are diverting the course of our inner destinies (*Pippa Passes*); the awakening of the first vague religious emotion in the soul of a doctor who has been the captive of empiricism (*An Epistle of Karshish*); the grounds for belief of a common pragmatist type (*Bishop Blougram's Apology*) —these "cases" among the best known present themselves to the mind. But there is no limit to the number of these small miracles of finesse and intuition; and the work of Browning is without doubt one of the richest and the most deep-reaching treatises in practical psychology that English literature has to offer, in a century when the novel, unstintingly and with such brilliancy, took upon itself the task of showing man what he really was.

To study things as they are, is the very end of scientific knowledge, in the broad sense in which the novel may pretend to figure among its instruments. Such a study is not and cannot be the main pursuit of poetry. Therefore, one might say that the error committed by Browning consists in having chosen paradoxically his means of expression. No fundamental necessity demanded that his analytical portraits, or his dissertations, should be expressed in verse. Still, one can suspect his reasons for desiring to retain, or in believing that he did retain, a poetical form. It is here not merely a case of passive fidelity to a tradition, though the eighteenth century had already presumed that moral analysis and rhythmic language go naturally hand in hand; nor is it the effect of a literary ambition which, taking shape as it did in the years of a romantic youth, did not change its name when it changed its object. If Browning continued all his life to put into verse themes which in themselves scarcely seem to call for this choice, it was not by obedience to a discipline accepted at one time, and then become habitual. In reality, it can be traced to an instinct of liberty, and, one might venture to say, to the law of least resistance. The spirit of poetic style, when liberally interpreted, permits audacious or irregular expressions, inversions, ellipses, and a spontaneity in order and rhythm, which prose, more severe in its modesty, does not usually tolerate. In order to instil some vivacity and life into his psychological dissections, Browning required a language that was easy, energetic, humorous, familiar or technical; similarly, to trace the sinuous working of a dense and complex thought, he had to be able to upset freely the normal construction of sentences. Only an artist of genius could have run this rebellious metal into the mould of prose. A poet of unequal and often mediocre gifts has been able to clothe it in the flowing vesture of a versification which, by claiming the benefit of a prosodiacal regularity, in itself very approximative, felt free to sacrifice unscrupulously the deeper rhythms of language, and the needs of art, to the claims of philosophy.

The work of Browning, written in this original and mixed form, which is neither prose nor verse, often gives an impression of beauty; but it is beauty of a spiritual and austere type, although human. The grandeur of the intellectual effort, the nobility of the moral reflection, the depth or acuteness of the interrelations brought to light, are the really important factors in this general impression; but there are also glowing moments of tragic and sympathetic emotion. This beauty, therefore, is both ample and powerful; and Browning is not only one of the most fertile minds, but one of the very great writers in English literature.

On the other hand, the unfortunate fact remains that, driven to the pen by a rational impulse, he does not transform this impulse in the very act of creative invention. What he gives us is merely the product of his intelligence, in a form of insufficient elaboration and artistic polish. Thus the substance of his art is not fit for the communication of thought through the medium of æsthetic sensibility; and its form does not add to it that vast inherent suggestion, alone possessed by those words which are the immediate and constant outcome of intuition. His language is disjointed, his verse amorphous, and in the majority of cases, neither has any intrinsic value; nor do they bring us any revealing joy. The work itself abounds in immense stretches of barren thought; and the sterility and monotony of his style will reappear even in his most inspired pages.

He has, however, his actually inspired moods, when, under the spell of a more simple emotion, or of some striking symbol, powerful enough to call up and organize sounds and images, he reaches the heights of poetry, in the most precise sense of this term. Few are the poems which can be described as flawless; but they strike an extraordinarily intense and poignant note in their charm, whose only fault is a touch of effort and strain.[1]

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[1] By way of examples, mention should be made, not of the popular *Evelyn Hope*, nor even of the equally popular *Love among the Ruins*, although both poems are expressively

After the publication of *The Ring and the Book,* Browning is still himself; his moments of real, poetic inspiration become fewer, while his conversations and dissertations in verse on varied and strange subjects demand from his readers a more stoical courage than before. But his vigour of thought, his force of analysis, his gift of perceiving what the soul is, and of re-creating it, these retain their striking interest.

During his lifetime Browning had conquered the indifference of the public, and by now he has ceased to be a bugbear in literature. He is widely read; indeed, many of his poems have come to be looked upon as part of the general patrimony. His work resembles an imposing edifice, but all its parts are not equally strong. One half will assuredly survive in the faithful study and worship of cultured readers; but it seems difficult to believe that posterity will not relegate the other half to the category of writings whose appeal is only to scholars and specialists.

To be consulted: Berger, *Robert Browning,* 1912; Stopford A. Brooke, *The Poetry of Robert Browning,* 1902; *Cambridge History of English Literature,* vol. xiii. chaps. ii. iii. iv. v. vi. vii.; Charpentier, *La Peinture anglaise* (no date); Elton, *Survey of English Literature,* 1830–80, 1920; Lounsbury, *Life and Times of Tennyson,* 1915; Mackail, *Life of William Morris,* 1899; Montégut, *Écriv. mod. de l'Angleterre,* 1885, etc.; Omond, *English Metrists,* 1921; Saintsbury, *History of English Prosody,* 1906; Sarrazin, *Poètes mod. d'Angleterre,* 1885; Verrier, *Essai sur les Principes de la Métrique anglaise,* 1909–10; Walker, *The Literature of the Victorian Era,* 1910.

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musical—but of *A Grammarian's Funeral,* in which a thought, a sentiment, and a rhythm have all been moulded together by the same creative act; or of the end of *Saul,* or of *Childe Roland,* which remain fixed in the memory because of their inner melody.

CHAPTER V

REALISM

1. Realism and the Literary Tendencies of the Victorian Era.—Realism in Art is not a method but a tendency, that is to say, something of a variable and relative nature, which can manifest itself in very diverse forms, and is difficult to gauge according to any fixed standards. It cannot be said to constitute the fundamental element to which one can trace back, as it were, the attitude of a writer; it is an effect as well as a cause; it is subservient to ideas, to motives of sentiment and principle, and these motives can be of extremely different character. There is scarcely any æsthetic intention which, if logically developed, may not lead to a more or less accentuated form of realism. It is clear, however, that in the unlimited range of artistic impulses there is a region which responds more especially to the realistic trend of creative effort; just as among theories of Art there are some doctrines, the guiding principle of which is realism, and which aim at defining exactly the means of attaining to this form of artistic expression.

It is in this more precise and, in a way, specialized sense that realism during the Victorian era assumes the character of a typical and dominant tendency. What had long since been, one might say, an instinct of paramount importance in English literature, then became a theoretical and recognized necessity. The general influences of the age tended to favour the taste and search for truth in art. The example of science and the prestige of a rational philosophy gave a more methodical character to the current conception of truth—even in the sphere of art—while, at the same time, they helped to extend considerably the limits of the artist's legitimate field of work. Documentation came naturally to be regarded as a literary ideal at a time when history, and the various moral sciences, were organizing themselves according to the example set by the different branches of mathematical knowledge; and naturalism, that is to say, the form of realism which seeks to treat of the aspects of life voluntarily neglected by traditional spiritualism, would also naturally make its appearance in an intellectual atmosphere where certain forms of physical knowledge, such as biology, were daily increasing their prestige and sphere of influence.

Naturalism implies an uncompromising logic in the extension of scientific positivism to literature proper, which was beyond the spontaneous instinct of the English mind. In England such a step had more difficulties to encounter than in France, because there was less initiative in the domain of theory, while certain prejudices, or a certain regard for modesty, were more strongly antagonistic to it. The strait-laced moral exigencies of the middle classes about 1850 had too strong an influence on public opinion to allow of such an extension; and the encouraging example of France, together with the relaxing of social discipline towards the last quarter of the century, counted for much in the appearance of naturalism in Victorian England. It came late, and therefore did not affect the period here under study. From 1832 to 1875, realism in England may be said to have developed under influences almost exclusively indigenous, keeping strictly within the limits of national tradition, such, at least, as the nineteenth century had set them.

The taste for realistic expression was not confined to one branch of literature; its action was perceptible even in poetry. But by a natural affinity, the novel seemed to be the instrument best suited to the effort after truth, in the study or the artistic treatment of reality.

Again, during this period many varieties of realism came into prominence, springing from psychological motives which were foreign, or even hostile, to any rational attitude in the writer. Thus, the art and poetry of the Pre-Raphaelites, the social novel of Kingsley and Mrs. Gaskell, are, in certain respects, the products of realistic tendencies; and yet, by the spirit which animates them, they must be classed among the expressions of the idealistic revival. But among all the varieties of realism, there is one great group, relatively interconnected, which by virtue of its size, its interest, and its value as a symptom, takes a place of primal importance; it is that in which the desire for accuracy, stimulated by what is newest and keenest in the atmosphere of the time, claims as its justification the pleasure or the contentment inherent in the search for truth.

Although the realistic novel is not the most brilliant or the most inspiring province of Victorian literature, it is the one in which all the various spiritual influences in this synthetic age are combined according to the most characteristic formula. At the time when science and feeling are either at war with each other, or seeking to be reconciled, when a strong desire for moral balance is endeavouring to effect such a reconciliation, the novel of George Eliot takes its place between the opposite poles of evolutionary philosophy on the one hand, and the idealism of the heart on the other; though much closer to the former, it traces, as it were, a resultant line between those conflicting forces. Victorian literature has many extreme forms; if it had a point which could be termed central, and typical, that point would be found in the work of the writer just named.

2. Thackeray.—As far as can be judged, the realism of Thackeray[1] owes nothing to the influence of science or of philosophy. The air he breathes is charged with the diffuse positivism of a utilitarian age, but he never quotes it in support of his opinions; indeed, by his intentions and his conscious ideas, he would rather seem to be its avowed enemy. Between his guiding impulse and the spirit which governs the researches of a scholar, one can find only certain general analogies, such as the same need for clear-sightedness, and the same distrust of all that prejudice or sentiment have called up and interposed between our eyes and the facts of life. One side of his nature is in reaction against Romanticism, sentimental illusion, and the half-conscious deceit of imagination. He is thus virtually in harmony with a decisive return, on the part of literature and thought, to an ideal of reason and lucidity.

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[1] William Makepeace Thackeray, born in 1811 near Calcutta, was the son of an employee of the East India Company; left India in 1817 for the southwest of England; studied at Charterhouse and Cambridge; visited Weimar and Paris, where he interested himself in painting; lost his fortune and lived by his wits as a journalist and caricaturist; returned to England in 1837 and published under various pseudonyms (Yellowplush, Gahagan, Solomons, Titmarsh, etc.) in *Fraser's Magazine, The New Monthly,* etc., critical articles, fantasies, short tales and novels: *Catherine,* 1839–40; *A Shabby-Genteel Story,* 1840; *The Paris Sketch-Book,* 1840; *The History of Samuel Titmarsh and the Great Hoggarty Diamond,* 1841; *The Fitz-Boodle Papers* and *Men's Wives,* 1842–43; *The Irish Sketch-Book,* 1843; *The Luck of Barry Lyndon,* 1844; in *Punch,* of recent foundation, he published *The History of the Next French Revolution,* 1844; *Jeames's Diary,* 1845–46; *The Snobs of England, by One of Themselves,* 1846–47 (*The Book of Snobs,* 1848); *Mr. Punch's Prize Novelists,* 1847, etc. He also signed himself Titmarsh in the series of Christmas Books (*Mrs. Perkins's Ball, Our Street,* etc.), 1847–57. But he employed his own name in *Vanity Fair* (a serial, 1847–48); *The History of Pendennis,* 1848–50; *The History of Henry Esmond,* 1852; *The Newcomes,* 1853–55; *The Virginians,* 1857–59; *Lovel the Widower,* 1860; *The Adventures of Philip,* 1861–62; he left unfinished *Denis Duval,* 1864. His two series of lectures, *The English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century,* were published in 1853; *The Four Georges,* 1855–56, appeared in 1860. The success of *Vanity Fair* placed him with Dickens in the front rank of writers, an honour which was his until his death in 1863. *Works,* ed. by Ritchie, 1898–99; ed. by Saintsbury, 1908. See the biography by Melville, 1910; studies by Trollope (English Men of Letters), 1879; Merivale and Marzials (Great Writers), 1891; Whibley, 1903; N. W. Stephenson (*Spiritual Drama in Life of Thackeray*), 1913.

But this is the effect of a wholly instinctive preference. Thackeray's mind has developed according to the law of his temperament. By birth he is essentially a realist, just as others are born visionaries, or gifted with a strong sense of feeling. His preferences are supported by maxims and grounded on precedents; but this effort can scarcely be said to have brought him nearer George Eliot, or directed his thoughts towards the future. It is the past which attracts him, the tradition of the eighteenth century. He is against a popularized and cheap Romanticism, and rather aims at joining the long line of sensible, self-possessed writers who, before the frenzied outburst of the last generation, had known how to live and think and write in harmony with themselves and the world. Just as Fielding took his stand over against Richardson, so Thackeray stands for the open and fair good sense in human nature, contrasted with a vulgarized form of Byronism.

These traits become prominent at an early date in Thackeray's life. Already in his university days he is trying his skill in parody. The ten years just preceding the publication of *Vanity Fair* are occupied with a whole series of youthful writings, hastily composed, varied in subject and of very unequal merit, but including certain parts which are really superior. Their almost only source is the easy spontaneity of the author's ironical verve. As with Fielding, affectation in all its forms is here aimed at: sentimentalism, social vanity, the false philanthropy which brings into fashion virtuous murderers, the literary pretensions of a Bulwer, the ambitious pride of a Disraeli. There is a mischievous touch in his observation of human follies, and, both as a writer and as a caricaturist, he knows how to bring them into relief. Scattered about, and published under various pseudonyms, this long series did not help in establishing the immediate reputation of its author. *Vanity Fair* had to appear before the general public became acquainted with his name. But in those early pages he had served his apprenticeship; he had learnt the art of constructing a tale, of sketching a character, of writing in a style at once simple, natural, and of the happiest spontaneity.

The themes of these essays can be grouped round three centres: conventional Romanticism, still lingering in the novel and melodrama; national idiosyncrasies, traceable in most cases to a naïve blindness, and to a total ignorance as regards one's fellow-men, together with a wrong interpretation of one's group; finally, and in all the range of its various shades, snobbery or the false estimation of social values. All these separate provinces belong to one and the same empire, that of insincerity, whose vast expanse had already been explored by Fielding.

At this date Thackeray is not a literary critic who takes himself very seriously, and it would be unjust to call him to account for his opinions, several of which are extremely superficial. The value of his early sallies resides in his very fine sense of the lie at the core of some mediocre writings, or of the mechanical skill which repeats and over-emphasizes the effect of the great masters. When Thackeray assumes the part of critic of the French mind, as in the *Paris Sketch Book*, or of Irish character, as in the *Irish Sketch Book*, his weaknesses are patent. Despite his sympathy for France, he cannot quite rid himself of British prejudice, and in scoffing at the infatuation of his French hosts he incidentally betrays his own. Again, although he warmly appreciates Irish good-humour, he does not go to the length of accepting, on its own value, or as having equal claims to consideration, the moral originality of a different people. But he cannot be held as altogether responsible for his opinions in sketches such as these, which were written from day to day and without any general plan. Whatever their limitations, they reveal the mind of an inquiring observer, of a talented journalist, of a psychologist who displays no great depth and is certainly not infallible, but is endowed with a gift of amused, or already saddened, penetration.

When Thackeray takes up the task of satirizing snobbery, he finds himself on favourite ground, and the quality of his work becomes appreciably stronger. From the beginning, he had always felt keenly the weakness of human character, when confronted with the claims of conventionality. His comic invention had led him to take a pleasure in upsetting the sacred order of things; he had considered society, customs, and even intellectual works, from the standpoint of a valet, Yellowplush; and his hero writes in a language full of the drollest of mistakes, but one feels that the irreverence has a sting. *The Book of Snobs* is made up of chapters brought together without much of a general plan, and it has obvious faults. The very notion of snobbery is somewhat vague; it gets broader and broader as the book unfolds itself; in the opening pages it represents the despicable veneration for what is hollow and false; at the end, it resolves itself into all the moral imperfection of man. Irritated by the obsession of base flattery which he sees or suspects everywhere, Thackeray attacks it with a humorous vigour which soon gives way to a bitter indignation; as in the case of Swift, his reprobation seems to ignore all bounds, and develops into an arraignment of humanity as a whole. No longer differentiating between a self-interested humility on the one hand, and vital utilitarianism on the other, the satirist proceeds to denounce the insignificant acts of beings who awaken our pity rather than our ire. And no doubt here we have the effect of a theme that has been worked upon to the point of satiety, without any deliberate purpose or thought-out measure. To give unqualified approval to the views of the author, one might say, would be to proclaim oneself a misanthrope and a revolutionary. But they take full effect against a meanness too subtly interwoven with social life for the man of the world to detest it sincerely, as is clearly shown by the hidden uneasiness perceptible in many of the judgments passed upon it.

Vanity Fair, Pendennis, The Newcomes, give full scope to the personality of the novelist. He appears to be very great, although as an artist he is incomplete. The first of these three novels is probably the best, in that it reveals all the writer's qualities while keeping his faults in the background. The other two have their moments of more subdued inspiration, which may win for them the suffrages of many; Colonel Newcome holds a warm place in the affection of English readers, justified no doubt by the splendid portrait he offers of the gentleman, but also explainable by the not irrelevant suggestion that he satisfies the desire for a sympathetic hero. The fact remains, however, that *Vanity Fair,* despite its occasional failings, and the looser construction of the second part, has a strength and a sureness of creative touch which stamp it as the decisive work of a writer who, once, gives full expression to his genius.

And this genius is more robust and many-sided than could have been expected from all that an ironical and somewhat fickle temperament seemed to hold in promise. The hostile attitude which Thackeray adopted towards Romanticism and sentimentality betrays its secret cause: the presence in the depths of his nature of a repressed Romanticism, a bitterness in which the disappointment of his feelings unites with the revelations of a clear-sighted intelligence. Through his deep and painful realization of the mediocrity of souls, and of the low level of all but a few characters, Thackeray comes to feel a mood akin to the desires and aspirations of the Romanticists, without being able or willing to yield to it wholly.

Realism, therefore, with Thackeray is prompted not by a detached curiosity, but by an emotional interest, which is much less cynical than it is impassioned. He is undoubtedly a seeker after truth; but truth is cruel, and it is in vain that the perception of this cruelty tries to hide itself; it continually breaks out. If one examines the fascination which attracts the analyst in Thackeray to probe the sore parts of human nature, one finds that there is in it an intellectual taste for sincerity, and also an impatience with all lies, coloured already by a touch of sensitiveness and personal feeling—a grudge against the illusion of which he himself has been a victim, some anger against art that is superficial, cowardly, and cannot or does not wish to see; and finally, that secret, deep delight in what is sad, that preference for all that savours of hopelessness, that love of evil, all of which really constitute a state of Romantic sensibility. The clear-sightedness which Thackeray displays in the first two hundred pages of *Vanity Fair* is as deadly as it is admirable; it is plain that he could not remain at this level of absolute frankness if he wanted his public to follow him; and, in order that it might do so, he came down. The subconscious workings of love of self, the delicate ramifications of egoism spreading through all human feelings, the skill and force of that inner demoniacal power which substitutes our own interest for the noble or honest intentions in which our clear consciousness takes pride, have never been dissected with such passionate eagerness. Only Swift had written thus in England; and although Smollett evinces the same bitterness, he has much less penetrative skill. At the end of the nineteenth century, moral criticism, with Butler and Shaw, was to display the same fearless courage; but their vision, compared with that of Thackeray, remains distinctly calm; his irony throbs with passion even in his most collected moments. And when Meredith, in his turn, will come to search the heart of his "Egoist," he will bring to his task a power of soaring poetry, the sovereign freedom of the comic spirit, whose light rapture will serve to mitigate his rancour.

Are there not any of our fellow-beings who can lay claim to our sympathy? Undoubtedly there are, and *Vanity Fair* affords several examples of such. A clear-sighted analysis of souls allows of a certain indulgence, or of a feeling of disillusioned tenderness towards some of them; but it is incompatible with the mental outlook in which the conventional novel delights. In these pages of Thackeray there are no heroes; at the most a Dobbin, chivalrous but dull, a faithful dog to those he protects and saves, and who repay his services with ingratitude; an Amelia, loving, passive, always in the background; for true heroism and affection are by no means clothed in all the beauty which our naïve desire for symbols lends to them; and if we were to be shown these virtues as they really are, few, if any, would recognize them in their mediocre garb. Life never offers a gem of pure water which Nature has cut in advance.

The complexity of things as they are puts other impediments in the way of the simple exigencies of a facile idealism. Becky Sharp cannot be ranked as a heroine, for the reason that she is exactly the opposite. But is it not true that, just as the author himself, we all in turn feel her ascendancy? Might it not be that art and life seem to oppose the absolute application of any moral category? Or does Becky perchance stand for a courage and elasticity of mind which have a value in themselves, and which it would be foolish to class according to a scale of virtues and vices? It belongs to the essence of this novel to bring these questions forward, even if the author is unable to answer them. Nor does he attempt to do so; for the reason, perhaps, that he is not sufficiently sure of his own deeper mind; and he is himself, in every respect, a divided soul.

Carried away, as it were, by his creation of Becky, he gives her such wonderful reality, that she dominates not only the novel, but also the whole of his work. Never has there been a more thorough study of the instinctive trickery, the inherent duplicity, the supple energy of a certain type of the eternal woman—the actress, the adventuress who scandalizes and conquers the world, invincible in her defeats, insecure in her triumphs. In what regards her, Thackeray's realism, intuitional at bottom, possesses an extraordinary force. But though it is carried to great length, it is limited by a remnant of sentimentalism, or by the respect which the writer still fosters for the demands of the public; the result is that Becky's fate does not differ from that of the other personages of Thackeray; it works itself out by a sort of edifying justice in the manner of Hogarth. Her career becomes an illustration of the rise and downfall of the courtesan. All this, of course, is suggested rather than actually exemplified, because the ban under which public opinion had placed certain subjects was as yet almost absolute.

The hesitancy which colours the art of Thackeray is here apparent. Influenced in one direction by certain tendencies, and at the same time attracted by others of an opposite nature, it cannot quite decide its choice. In many respects the guiding spirit in this realistic work is the need of tender emotion, as with Dickens. While the action of the story may seem to avoid traditional conclusions, in the end it comes to favour them. At the same time as Thackeray has a liking for cruel truth, he has a yearning love for kindness, and even advocates its merits. At first the plot unfolds itself very logically, emanates, so to speak, from the characters themselves; but, when a hundred and one providential happenings intervene, it very soon loses its firm outline. On the whole it is so long and complicated, so mingled with extraneous elements—in the present case entire episodes borrowed from recent history—the trend of thought is interrupted by so many digressions and moral reflections, that the work, when viewed at one glance, seems very loosely put together. And this applies also to *Pendennis* and *The Newcomes.*

In another direction, again, Thackeray selects his materials quite as much as he submits to facts. His descriptive painting of social surroundings is strong and vivid, rich in detail, of a less intense quality than that of Dickens, and more faithful to average truth; yet it is far from being objective. If realism can be defined as pursuing an ideal which, indeed, is chimerical—a kind of scientific faithfulness in the reproduction of facts—then Thackeray is hardly a realist. While he is precise in delineation, he brings out the picturesque elements of every scene, the pathos or the humour of every situation; the field of possibility is marked out into arbitrary provinces in accordance with his personal experience, and his pen-pictures of society are most openly incomplete. There is no desire on his part to make his investigations either methodical or documentary.

While Thackeray in his work shows himself the grim psychologist of the "vanity" of human sentiment, another leading impulse with him is that of historical imagination; a duality of talent which is in every way characteristic of the man, because he is as much a poet as an analyst. From the point of view of art, *Henry Esmond* is the best of his books; here the atmosphere is that of the classical period, and the joy of living through the mind in an age—that of Queen Anne—the manners and spirit of which he loved, stimulates and guides his inventive powers, suggesting and strengthening a definite unity of tone. In this story, as serene and restrained in its moments of emotion as in those of quiet amusement, there is a grave harmony which can be described as a success in delicate and refined impressionism. The book possesses great merit in the construction of certain characters, as well as in the picture it traces of a past epoch in history; at the same time, it has its weak points, such as the inability of the writer to cut away what is only accessory, and keep severely to the main lines of the plot. But when compared with *The Virginians* which followed it, it seems more closely knit together. And in spite of the more open incursions of the author into the literature or the history of the eighteenth century (*The English Humorists, The Four Georges,* etc.), *Esmond* retains all its superiority, because in a novel literary criticism and the reconstruction of facts are not subject to the same technical demands.

We feel, however, with Thackeray that he has not realized his genius to the full. He never took thoroughly in hand either his life or his work; even when he was a respectable and famous writer, he kept a little of the Bohemian in him. He has left no book which can be described as perfect. Artist though he is, with the pen and with the pencil, it is by his art—the organization and elaboration of form—that he stands open to the injuries of time. But his temperament shows qualities of supreme originality; and when he is at his best he cannot be rivalled. The satirist, the humorist, the novelist in Thackeray, all have their individual and uncommon traits; when combined, they go to form a personality as rich as it is charming; but when Thackeray becomes the cruel and sad psychologist of the heart, the realistic painter of the emotions, he brings a new and unique contribution to the literature of England.

3. Trollope, Reade, Wilkie Collins, etc.—Between Thackeray and George Eliot a series of minor novelists manifest the continuance of the spirit of realism. This spirit develops and gains precision under the general influences of an age which is above all intellectual and positive. On the one hand, it tends with Trollope and Reade towards the ideal of strict documentation; on the other, with Reade and Wilkie Collins, towards an ideal—to all appearances quite the opposite—of sensational intensity. These two elements, bound together by certain psychological and literary affinities, were later to be fused with each other under the influence of French naturalism, and lead to the quest for a truth at once objective and startling.

There is to be noted in the art of Trollope[1] a rather delicate shade of difference. The main part of his work is a series of novels, limited in scope, which treat of a small provincial town, and of the ecclesiastical world in the shadow of its cathedral—including as well glimpses of the fuller social life of the surroundings. All this is described with precision and piquancy, in a rather uniform colouring, by a writer who is at once painstaking and methodical, and who prides himself upon the possession of such qualities. One could be tempted into believing that this work is a first draft of what will later develop into monographs on professional or local subjects, born from a doctrinal realism. In fact, Trollope had no preconceived plan of writing; he did not possess any particular knowledge of Church circles; and his portraits, like his pictures of daily life and habits, are really the results of intuition and conjecture, rather than a photographic reproduction of what he saw.

And yet it is not wrong to rank him with the realists. He works up data in which pure observation, the passive registering of facts, does not occupy a foremost place. Nevertheless, we owe to his creative talent scenes and personages of a likelihood which is, in the field of art, equal, if not superior, to actual reality. All his methods tend to give an impression of average truth. As the neutralized image of the world, conceived by one who thinks clearly and whose powers of vision are devoid of originality, the miniature society Trollope depicts has few extremes; pathos and humour are not lacking in it, but they are subdued and controlled. As to the accuracy and immediacy of his reproductive talent, he has deceived competent judges; he instinctively aimed at a certain quality in art, and attained to it by his own means. He possessed the essence of realism, which consists in the inner intention of the artist first, and concerns his technique only in the second instance.

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[1] Anthony Trollope (1815–82), an official in the postal service, wrote novels with a methodical regularity, which he has depicted not without some complacency; the great success of *The Warden* (1855) encouraged him to develop the same theme in a series: *Barchester Towers,* 1857; *Doctor Thorne,* 1859; *Framley Parsonage,* 1867; *The Small House at Allington,* 1864; *The Last Chronicle of Barset,* 1867; he tried his hand at the political novel (*Phineas Finn,* 1869, etc.), and the problem novel (*The Vicar of Bullhampton,* 1870), but here with less success; his *Autobiography* is useful to consult (1883). He also contributed a study of *Thackeray* to the English Men of Letters series in 1879. *The Barsetshire Novels,* Introduction by Frederic Harrison, 1906. See Saintsbury, *Corrected Impressions,* 1875; Sir Leslie Stephen, *Studies of a Biographer,* vol. iv., 1902; T. H. S. Escott, *Anthony Trollope, His Works, Associates, and Literary Originals,* 1913; Saintsbury, *Trollope Revisited,* 1920.

The case of Charles Reade[1] is different. Not only is he a realist by temperament, but also by method, and to a degree of conscientiousness and system that had as yet been unequalled in England. He has described his habits and rules; and, a few years later, they were to be those of Zola, who formed them independently. According to the documentary formula, a novelist is a compiler who gathers together, against future use, all that experience has revealed on various situations and problems. He borrows from personal observation, but above all, from the organs in which are registered the current happenings of everyday existence: newspapers, magazines, technical reports, accounts of law court proceedings. In this way, Reade believes, reality can be caught with infallible certainty, since it is "snapped," so to speak, in its natural state, and before it has been elaborated and more or less modified by the spirit of generalization or moralizing. This was the plan which he put into practice. All his work is built upon facts. Whether he treats of the Middle Ages or his own epoch, whether he seeks to appeal to our emotions or only to add to our knowledge, he will not state anything unless he is positively sure of what he says. This is a common feature of his writing, be it the historical novel, *The Cloister and the Hearth*, or the novels with a social purpose, such as *Hard Cash* and *Put Yourself in His Place*, or the novels of adventure in the category of *Jack of All Trades*. They owe it some sort of unity.

Charles Reade has serious merits. He knows how to tell a story, to create the impression of fatality and of the interdependence of causes. His dramatic episodes—to which the precise delineation of detail, and the strong yet restrained imaginative colouring of the narration, impart some of the vividness of reality—are moving enough. However, his philanthropic arguments leave us indifferent; aiming, as they do, at very particular cases of abuse, they become too documentary and loaded with circumstantial detail to rouse emotion. They convince us, but they lack that stimulating warmth of feeling which Dickens, whose arguments are less solid, knew better how to suggest. In Reade's work, which is of so varied a nature, the most living pages might be found in *The Cloister and the Hearth*, an ambitious study of the transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, certainly eloquent, though often over-estimated; and mostly in *Griffith Gaunt* or *A Terrible Temptation*, where the handling of psychological and pathological "cases" is carried out with a strength of touch, a spirit of boldness and a disregard of certain traditional reserves, through which his realism reaches the actual quality of French "naturalisme."

The work of Wilkie Collins[2] enables us to seize an intermediary movement of similar import; this, on the one hand, is connected with the ever-increasing severity of realism, and, on the other, with a reviving need of emotional expression, which prepares the way for what was going to be a new Romantic literature. Collins brought into fashion the sensational tale, in which the mechanical plotting of a crime is ingeniously and elaborately worked out. Dickens in the novels of his later years showed the same tendency; his *Edwin Drood* is a well-known example. Collins in his work combines the feeling of terror and the art of creating an atmosphere of intense, imaginary anguish, with a meticulous care in the manipulation of his facts, and an accurate use of technical knowledge. The revival of adventure in all its forms, and the singular success of the contemporary detective novel, are thus adumbrated; but no less apparent is an ever bolder search for literary effects in the violent aspects of reality, and in the emotional appeal of life's untold possibilities. A certain kind of the supernatural, which finds its source in the exceptional accidents of human experience, and sets the whole nervous system on edge, completes and crowns the efforts of realism, while leaving it behind and even including its contradiction.[1]

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[1] Charles Reade (1814–84) wrote dramas (*Gold*, 1853; *Drink*, adapted from the *Assommoir* of Zola, 1877), and chiefly novels; *Peg Woffington*, 1853; *Christie Johnstone*, 1853; *It Is Never Too Late to Mend*, 1856; *Jack of All Trades*, 1858; *The Cloister and the Hearth*, 1861; *Hard Cash*, 1863; *Griffith Gaunt*, 1866; *Put Yourself in His Place*, 1870; *A Terrible Temptation*, 1871, etc. See Charles L. and Compton Reade, *Charles Reade, a Memoir*, etc., 1887.

[2] Wilkie Collins (1824–89): *The Woman in White*, 1860; *No Name*, 1862; *The Moonstone*, 1868, etc. See *Letters of Charles Dickens to Wilkie Collins*, 1892; Phillips, *Dickens, Reade, Collins, Sensation Novelists*, 1919.

4. **George Eliot.**—George Eliot[2] is a writer whose fame is menaced. She is a victim of the discredit which opinion to-day throws upon her generation, and which will pass with time. Graver, however, are the reasons for disfavour which concern her personally. The upholders of tradition have never forgiven her bold ventures in philosophic thought, nor excused that act in her life which, though it agreed with the ethics of the heart, jarred with the principles admitted by custom. Critical spirits, or lovers of pure art, are not without resenting either the moderation of her thought, or the weightiness which her intellectuality often gives her prose. Some have always looked upon her with mistrust, while many would be tempted to think that she was too prudent in her opinions. Even among her admirers, there are few who do not find in her work a faint suspicion of heaviness. In the study of her novels, therefore, one must keep oneself immune from a prejudiced hostility which, undoubtedly, is unjust, and at the same time not be influenced by the intemperate zeal which might awake from the feeling that one was pleading a cause.

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[1] Edward Lytton Bulwer, Lord Lytton (1803–73), a versatile writer, less original than brilliant, was the mirror of literary fashions for three-quarters of a century; he had his phase of realism, when his art was uncertain and confused (*The Caxtons*, 1849; *My Novel*, 1853; *What Will He Do with It?* 1858). He also wrote novels dealing with social problems, where he is more the clever than the moving writer: *Paul Clifford*, 1830; *Eugene Aram*, 1832; historical novels: *The Last Days of Pompeii*, 1834; *Rienzi*, 1835; *The Last of the Barons*, 1843; *Harold*, 1848; dramas: *Richelieu*, 1838; *The Lady of Lyons*, 1838; novels of terror and of the supernatural: *Zanoni*, 1844; *The Haunted and the Haunters*, 1859; *A Strange Story*, 1862. Nothing in his work is more sincere than his *Pelham*, 1828, the study of a type of dandy who was the rage of the time, or *The Coming Race*, 1871, where the picture is that of a kind of Utopia which resembles in several points the *Erewhon* of Butler. If his popularity was in any way the gauge of his value, Lytton would rank as a great writer of his day. At the same time he merits something better than mere indifference. See his biography by Lytton (V. A. G. R.), 1913.

[2] Mary Ann Evans, born in 1819 in Warwickshire, a keen student, gave herself a varied education, frequented the centres of advanced thought, translated the *Leben Jesu* of Strauss (1846), the *Essence of Christianity* of Feuerbach (1854); collaborated in the *Westminster Review*, knew Spencer, and Lewes whose life she shared and who encouraged her to write works of imagination. She published, under the name of George Eliot, novels: *Scenes of Clerical Life* (in *Blackwood's Magazine*, 1857; in a volume, 1858), which had a great success; *Adam Bede*, 1859; *The Mill on the Floss*, 1860; *Silas Marner*, 1861; *Romola*, 1863; *Felix Holt the Radical*, 1866; *Middlemarch*, 1871-72; *Daniel Deronda*, 1876; poems: *The Spanish Gipsy*, 1868; *The Legend of Jubal*, etc., 1874; essays: *The Impressions of Theophrastus Such*, 1879, etc. After the death of Lewes (1878) she married J. W. Cross, and died the same year, 1880. Her correspondence was utilized by her husband for her biography (*Life and Letters*, 1885). *Works*, Warwick ed., 1901-3. See study by M. Blind, 1883; Cooke, 1883; C. Thomson, 1901; L. Stephen (English Men of Letters), 1902; Olcott, 1911; Gardner (*Inner Life of George Eliot*), 1912; Deakin (*Early Life of George Eliot*), 1913; M. L. Cazamian (*Le Roman et les Idées en Angleterre*), 1923.

It is perhaps best to divide her work into two parts. There is no question of leaving the first entirely aside, although very probably much of it must be given up. George Eliot had of necessity to pay for the crisis which brought about her emancipation, which raised her from the status of a young country girl to be the equal of the most scholarly minds of her time, and transformed the daughter of Puritan parents into a pupil of Spencer and Comte. Her independence, won after a long and strenuous struggle, was to leave its mark upon her for life. It gave her a taste for discussion, awakened the desire in her to explain her own conduct, or that of the beings she created, in the most explicit and logical manner; it inspired her with the familiar love and respect of formulated principles. All the intellectuality and fondness for reasoning which seemed to be part and parcel of her very being, deprived or tended to deprive her of a certain happy spontaneity, afforded her less scope for the play of instinct, and made purely artistic creations less natural to her, while rendering more natural the painstaking efforts of artificial labour. Since her vocation was to write, and to be a novelist, she did much during the first thirty years of her life to direct what was to be her gift of invention towards lucid and dry forms of expression.

Although her imaginative resources were thus impoverished, she gained in other respects. There is always a strengthening virtue in the conquest of one's own personality. The moral nobility of her inner development with its honesty of purpose, its courageous determination, not only lent a deeper spiritual quality to her thought, but imparted to all that she wrote a fragrance of ardent sincerity which compensates for many failings of her æsthetic judgment.

Thus it can be said that her realism was conscious and systematic; all the gifts of her intellectual culture contributed to it, while in it the influence of science, which she had thoroughly imbibed, is everywhere manifest. She had made a study of history as of exegesis; she was acquainted with the psychology of the Utilitarians, and had accepted the doctrine of evolution as soon as it was first explained. As an inevitable result of the mental discipline of her youth, she felt the need of precision and objectivity, and dwelt upon the idea that any object of study, no matter what it be, has its own infinite value. The construction of her novels, the substance of her analyses, and much of her imagery, recalled this scientific schooling of her thought. But realism to her is much more than a mere method, or even an intellectual necessity; it is an emotion and a creed, and this she has explained with perfect clearness. All the modest virtues and vices of humble folks, however mediocre or disgraced they may be by nature, become attractively interesting to her, and the source of this interest is love. Her words ring with the supreme appeal of a common brotherhood and common sufferings; and whatever stress she may lay on the solidarity between men which Nature enforces and which intelligence comes to recognize, her ethical beliefs spring from that spontaneous gift of the heart: sympathy.

It is no easy task, therefore, to divide what is fresh and natural in her work from what remains dry and lifeless, or rather to distinguish between the causes which give rise to these conflicting elements. Besides, they are often combined. The most barren wastes in her prose are not without some oases, just as the vistas of refreshing green are broken by flat stretches of stony dreariness. But, upon the whole, a great number of her arguments, of her intentions, and most of the expressions which these naturally called forth, are more directly related, no doubt, to dialectics than to poetry, in the sense in which every artist is a poet. The bare framework of her ideas is often too much in evidence; not infrequently, the situations and characters allow the reader a glimpse of the inner architecture which backs and supports them; and her style, through many a page, through whole chapters and episodes, has the indefinable quality that suggests a lesson in psychology, ethics or history.

The value of the philosophy imparted in the deliberate teaching of George Eliot's novels, and the literary intentions which she enunciates most openly, have and will retain their particular merit, even if we prefer to find in other parts of her work its most precious assets and its most vital interest. In *Adam Bede* she expounds the doctrine granting each of us the initiative which works out our moral and religious destiny; *The Mill on the Floss* is devoted to a study of the collaboration of character with circumstances in the fulfilment of fate; *Silas Marner* treats of all the hidden forces which shape man's personality through the contact of his fellows; the subject of *Felix Holt* is the prominent part played by the education of the individual in any matter dealing with social reform, etc. Such are the main themes of the novels; but there are others which form, so to speak, the background, and which are really of deeper significance as well as more substantial: the interdependence of all human beings; the intricate workings of consequence which propagate the influence of a given act, for good or for evil, beyond our visible horizon, in ever-widening circles; and more especially, the pathetic quality of the most common human emotions.

All this, undoubtedly, has its value. But this doctrine is not transmuted completely enough into the silent preconceptions of creative imagination itself; it is not sufficiently dissolved into the plastic elements of her art; it remains a doctrine, asserting and expressing itself as such. And it is just in these avowed assertions that the weakness of George Eliot's work is to be found. Similarly, the laboured exertions of her will have added no supreme achievement to her fictions. The scholarly historical setting of *Romola* may be estimable, but it leaves us cold; *Daniel Deronda* is a strong but unsuccessful attempt, because it is almost entirely artificial. Even in the most vigorous and spontaneous among her novels, there are passages, and features, which explain these partial failures.

The other part of her work bears the stamp of true inspiration. It is not less rich in persuasive ideas, for it breathes the communicative ardour of fraternal sympathy, the keen and kindly perception of the inner life of souls, and a powerful sense of that hard-won heroic virtue, to the height of which we all have, some time or other, to rise. All the doctrine of George Eliot is here, implied in the very facts of her stories. But at the same time it allows of artistic creation, and even expresses itself through it. The touching *Scenes of Clerical Life,* almost the whole of *Adam Bede,* much of *Silas Marner,* the main part of *The Mill on the Floss* and *Middlemarch,* belong to this order of spontaneous and concrete invention. It is more than enough to guarantee the fame of a great writer.

For in works such as these there is a livening and animating force at the base of the writer's art. From her experience of life, from her knowledge of self, or from an intuitive revelation, she draws the material for an imaginary world, which has in it the essence of reality. And this world is ample enough to allow for all possible contrasts, and call forth smiling amusement as well as loving compassion; it can even arouse a feeling of angry irony. The humour of George Eliot is not the least of her qualities; it is a salutary and pleasing element, which introduces an invigorating freshness into her prose. More often of a tender, playful, even delicate nature, it grows satirical at times, and acquires then a sharp edge which contradicts, as in the portrait of the Dodsons (*The Mill on the Floss*), the general lesson of sympathy; but none among her readers will object to this. The study of Mrs. Poyser in *Adam Bede* is an unalloyed source of joy; in *Silas Marner* there are lively scenes of rural realism.

The world in which the imagination of George Eliot finds itself at greatest ease is that of the provinces, the home of her early years; and, no doubt, her creative faculty is not to the same degree dramatic; she is essentially a revealer of self. But the beings she creates represent, as it were, imaginary aspects or developments of her "ego," and acquire the quality of truth by reason of this vital bond. Some are women, such as Dinah Morris (*Adam Bede*) and Dorothy (*Middlemarch*); some are men, such as Amos Barton, Silas Marner, or Philip Wakem (*The Mill on the Floss*); but it is plain that they take after the authoress herself, and that her personality passes into them all.

Once, however, she has taken herself as the direct object of study, and created her masterpiece in Maggie Tulliver (*The Mill on the Floss*). The first two hundred pages of this novel are, probably, the most nearly perfect she has written; for the faithful evocation of scenic detail as well as of popular customs, and the astonishing accuracy of the psychology, are the outcome of an immediate and infallible impulse, translating into words the ever-present vision of the past.

From *Scenes of Clerical Life* to *Middlemarch*, George Eliot is an incomparable painter of the lower circles of English provincial life, and of a whole order of souls who, simple as social values go, are nevertheless spiritually complex, torn by scruples, and by the anguish of moral conflicts. In this sphere, her art derives its value from its truth as much as from the emotional interest it creates, and indissolubly from both.

No doubt she was aware of this, or, at the end, she recognized it. Her intellectual zeal, already cautious and open to all human feelings during the years of her ardent youth, grew still more tempered, gentle, modest and tender in the course of her life. She preserved the religion of truth without retaining its dogmatism. The philosophy of *The Mill on the Floss* left ample scope to what is inexplicable, to the hazards which cannot be avoided by every upright and sincere thinker. In *Middlemarch*, the psychology tends more clearly towards an intuitive idea of mind and consciousness. Her most powerful novel, even if it is not the most inspired or the most harmoniously constructed, is the last in which the activity of her courageous, ever-moving mind has been expressed in terms of scenes and figures familiar to herself, and thus endowed with artistic reality.

To be consulted: E. Bouvier, *La Bataille réaliste*, 1914; Brunetière, *Le Roman naturaliste*, 1884; *Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. xiii. chaps. ix. xi. xiii.; M. L. Cazamian, *Roman et Idées en Angleterre*, 1923; J. W. Cross, *Life and Letters of George Eliot*, 1885; W. L. Cross, *The Development of the English Novel*, 1899; David-Sauvageot, *Le Réalisme et le Naturalisme dans la Littérature et l'Art*, 1890; Elton, *Survey of English Literature*, 1830-80, 1920; Phelps, *Advance of English Novel*, 1919; Phillips, *Dickens, Reade, Collins, Sensation Novelists*, 1919; F. T. Russell, *Satire in the Victorian Novel*, 1920; Sadleir, *Excursions in Victorian Bibliography*, 1922; Saintsbury, *Trollope Revisited*, 1920; Walker, *The Literature of the Victorian Era*, 1910.

BOOK VII

NEW DIVERGENCIES (1875-1914)

CHAPTER I

THE CHANGE IN LITERARY THOUGHT: CAUSES AND CHARACTERISTICS

The years 1875-1880 correspond to a turning-point in the history of English literature, as well as in the very life of England. About this time should be placed the beginning of a new period—the last whose development is fully known to us. It can be considered as ending with the outbreak of the Great War—a deep-felt influence, cutting through all the strands of reality, and the effect of which, at the present day, is still incalculable.

The causes and the features of that change can be summed up, due stress being laid on social circumstances, but making due allowance for the inner rhythm of the mind, whose pulsation remains perceptible, even if it becomes weaker with the reciprocal penetration of its phases.

The third quarter of the nineteenth century—the period from 1850 to 1875—had been for Great Britain an era of unequalled prosperity. A wave of optimism, and of trust in the future of the country, had risen in consequence. A national culture so obviously in a state of equilibrium both within itself, and with the conditions of its foreign surroundings, might well entertain the feeling of its own value. This age, the main body and stronghold of the Victorian era, is a static epoch. After 1875, under repeated and various shocks, that equilibrium is destroyed or weakened; its place is taken by a feeling of instability. Set loose again, the tendencies which had been for a time gathered into a powerful synthesis make their diverging trend once more felt. With the last quarter of the century, the Victorian spirit obscurely loses its self-confidence; and meanwhile, the need of a spiritual renovation appears and forces itself upon the national consciousness. Whatever may be the chronological sequence of these two facts—and their roots are too much entangled for such an order to be perceptible—they show themselves as simultaneous, and intimately connected. A third fact is soon added to them: thus growing again more flexible, and therefore more susceptible of impressions, the English literary temperament becomes more open to foreign intellectual movements; it welcomes more readily some influences from abroad.

The breakdown of confidence is the outcome of a crisis in prosperity. British industries are hurt or threatened by the competition of younger nations. The export trade ceases to grow. As a whole, the economic activity of the country shows a decline; this reacts on the condition of the working classes; unemployment and poverty are on the increase; strikes, as a result, grow more numerous; a chronic feeling of unrest sets in, and socialism, which since 1850 has practically disappeared, again is seen as an active force. From this time forth, however brilliant may be the triumphs achieved by English energy in the field of production and trade, a golden age, and the happy expectation of easy victories, are past and gone. This dim anxiety is widespread in the atmosphere of the century drawing to its end; its image is mirrored, in a thousand ways, by all the moods of thought. The anguish and the conquests of the South African war, the coming to a head of the feeling of Empire, stimulate that uneasiness much more than they allay it.

The craving for a renovation, on the other hand, seems to act independently, according to its own principle. It assumes various expressions, which may appear contradictory, but are in fact harmoniously related and connected. Those tendencies most quickly and decisively assert themselves which during the previous period were, at least relatively, restrained and repressed. In spite of the exuberant revolts of idealism, the Victorian age, at the stage of its full growth, had found its central aim in the search for balance through reason; it had been before everything intellectual and positively minded. The age which succeeds it is thus bound to witness a Romantic revival, although the special aspect, the individual shades, and the original quality of this Romanticism cannot be known in advance.

The spiritual structure of the new period reveals itself first through the self-assertion of sensibility on several lines. Feeling, no longer accepting to be bound by the various sets of rules which had severely restrained it, rebels against them, and tends to set itself up as the sufficient or the sovereign principle of thought and life. The philosophy and the literature of the declining century are filled with an impassioned revolt against science. The rational study of things, as a method, has not justified the hopes which it had raised, or which had gathered round it, without its taking actual responsibility for them; it has not given man the material and moral happiness which had been naïvely expected of it. On the contrary, it has destroyed or dried up some of the fountain-heads of joy; it has struck out sources of bitterness yet unknown. Rationalism meanwhile, hated and denounced as it is by impatient angry spirits, faces the rebellion of instinct with a still unperturbed equanimity; it feels itself proof against the direct onslaughts of its adversaries. But now the citadel is turned. The creative activities of the mind are no longer willing to follow that narrow sunken road which imperious logic, from a position of vantage, overlooks and commands. Another way is discovered; more direct and easy at first, it then crosses unexplored regions, where errors and doubts are lurking, and cause sudden alarms; but it opens up virgin territories, in which abundant wealth lies hidden. In an endeavour to conquer spiritual freedom, the rights of intuition are proclaimed; mysticism revives in all its forms; and philosophy, ethics, art, at one through the working of a secret psychological affinity, readily contribute to the making of a new Romanticism.

Imagination was being emancipated at the same time. Victorian rationalism no doubt had not spurned its aid, but had treated it as a mere assistant. Now it assumes authority in its turn. With rapturous joy, the spirit of adventure reawakens; the unknown, the beyond, are again invested with the attraction which they had possessed to such a degree three-quarters of a century earlier, and of which they had been robbed for a time by the ambition, the assurance of knowing and understanding all. The feeling of the mysterious side of things is no longer repressed; it is accepted, and even sought for its own sake. Day-dreams are now a permissible means of refreshment for the soul, a means of knowledge even; conduct itself can be founded upon them. The novel and lyric poetry are transformed by the virtue of that freedom; they draw from it a variety, a fancy, a wealth at once more substantial and more delicate. While realism, in several directions, continues, and even grows more intense, a revolt breaks out against the compulsion enforced by realism, and by the positivist spirit whence it sprang.

In so far as this predominance of sensibility and imagination is concerned, the reaction which now begins recalls the Romanticism of the eighteen-twenties.

But the new circumstances among which it takes place, and the different influences of its surroundings, introduce quite other elements into its composition. The Victorian age had bowed to a strict discipline in social life and in morals; this is now relaxed, and as a consequence the repressed instincts are set loose again; unless one should rather say that the instincts, stimulated by a revival of the elementary powers of human nature, bend down and break the rule of repression. The senses in their turn claim their freedom; they force a bolder range of subjects, of tone and expression, upon a nation addicted in principle to austerity in language and manners. Everywhere the new aim is intensity. In the plane of sensation, of individuality and desire, intensity is stressed at the expense of a reserve which excluded a whole class of realities from art or from unhampered discussion. In the plane of intelligence, on the other hand, this same need of intensity urges the critical faculties of the mind to a degree of rigour yet unknown. And so the period 1875–1914 not only appears as a counterpart to that which preceded it, showing complementary characteristics; it is at the same time, in many respects, the continuation and further development of the previous age. A new spirit of restlessness, anarchy and adventurous experiment is tending to replace the imposing and decorous wisdom of the Victorian compromise in all things; and it is often through this mood of revolt, rather than through the nature of the tendencies in themselves, that the present is different from the past. The influences from abroad, in so far as they are felt, act as so many stimuli, accentuating movements to which the instinct and genius of Great Britain had spontaneously given birth.

Thus made of such various elements, this age offers an extremely complex structure. It shows us the most contradictory tendencies side by side. The new Romanticism, which gives it its general stamp, is steeped to the core with the keenest intellectuality. In one and the same group of writers, and occasionally in one and the same author—such as Samuel Butler—rational criticism in its typical form, free from any moderating influence, is associated with an attitude of rebellion against the excesses of scientific dogmatism. A psychological connection unites the renascence of religious idealism, full as it is of moral zeal, with promptings of free inquisitiveness, and with a bold curiosity of thought, the outcome of which is to liberate art from ethics, and ethics from all consistent rule. Forcible and earnest doctrines, which subordinate the individual to society or to the Empire, find themselves in contact with an æstheticism that recognizes no law but itself.

The diverging currents of the period can thus be more precisely mapped out. First is heard the protest of intuitive and mystic needs against the authority of reason, and against mechanical views, which seemed the inevitable upshot of rational thinking. Philosophy proper, then the reflection of cultivated minds on the general conclusions of sciences, and the literature of fancy, testify to this revival. This revolt is mainly brought about by the renascence of feeling, but intelligence has its share in it; and so varied and rich is this movement, that such writers as Meredith and Samuel Butler meet there. Along with the illusion of a safe simple happiness attached to the all-sufficient virtue of truth, this period sees the secure optimism of the preceding age disappear; science now is the source from which a tragic or austere despair takes its rise; over the dark background of the universe, as read and explained by science, Thomson, Hardy and Gissing raise the fabric of their pessimistic visions, either cloud-built, or in close contact with the hard surface of a joyless earth.

The new Romanticism is thus liberated from the intellectual restraint which checked its growth, and now can freely and fully develop. Its inner impulse carries it either to the most dissimilar beliefs, or to a kind of hedonistic unbelief, which finds a bitter-sweet pleasure in absolute negation. In this broad field one sees at a glance a vast number of tendencies, personalities and works.

Here is on one hand the lyrical poetry of Swinburne, with its sensuous ardour and its enthusiastic cult of words; and on the other hand that of Francis Thompson, with its wondering mystical faith. Next we find Stevenson, and the novel of imagination and adventure. Next again, the æstheticism of Pater and Wilde, with the many and various refinements, either subtle or morbid, which flourish in the decadent close of the century. The worship of art for art's sake, with George Moore, receives a darker shade from the harsh raw naturalism which the practice of France stimulates and guides: such essential unity there is in the spirit of moral freedom, the common source of both movements. And the Celtic revival diversifies this same background with its brooding fancies and dreams.

The opening of the new century witnesses a change in the main features of the period. Dispelling the thick atmosphere of perversity and pessimism which had seemed more and more to settle upon it, the doctrines of action call back the age to a healthier meditation of broad common principles of conduct. These doctrines have their roots in the forcible faiths of the Victorian prophets; but they belong in fact to their own time, and bear its stamp. The imperialism of Kipling takes its stand on an intuitive and violent contempt of intelligence; the constructive socialism of Wells is stirred by a powerful aspiration to spiritual light, which gradually endows it with a fervent soul. The enmity against reason and science goes with Chesterton as far as the imperative cult of the irrational.

On the eve of the Great War, English literature could show a fine galaxy of talented writers, between whom there did not seem to exist the least convergence in temperament or in method. No school put its discipline in force; no grouping or organizing principle was discovered. On the whole, the reign of the new Romanticism was not over; in other words, the larger number of artists still followed an instinctive preference, whether obscure or lucid, for imaginative emotion as opposed to intelligence. But the novel, the drama, and poetry, with Galsworthy, Bennett, Shaw, Yeats, Masefield, and so many others, while they allowed the persistent effect of this preference to come out, still would tone it down, and qualify it through many contradictory elements. It was becoming increasingly clear that the individual author was bound by no rule but that of his own temperament; that any desire to write or create under the guiding authority of artistic forms common to all, accepted in advance, justified and prepared by precedents, was finally disappearing. The first Romanticism had freed the personality of the writer from its shackles; the second, coming after the attempt at a relative and partial synthesis which the Victorian age had made, encouraged such a teeming wealth of idiosyncrasies, that the very feeling of some moral link between writers of the same generation tended more and more to die out. It is hardly possible, here, to speak of a literary period in the proper meaning of the word; the unity of time is, most often, a mere outside frame.

Has the unexampled harrowing of souls during the last war laid in them the seeds of a more harmonious harvest, reduced to a more uniform quality by the very vigour of the sap, the fertility of the soil? None can say yet. Looking only at this latest phase, we might think that the literature of England, like that of France, had reached the point of saturation at which the accumulated influences of the successive ages impart a richly flavoured complexity to the products of a national art, but deny it the power of being efficiently renewed through a simple change. Combined in the depths of the national mind, the tendencies which have successively triumphed in the course of a long and varied past now penetrate and alter one another; they are all, and in every case, more or less present and active. It is not impossible that an art founded on the search for balance, and so, predominantly rational, should try soon in England

—as it has been doing in France—to replace the new Romanticism of yesterday; but in this event, it is extremely probable that this art, at the very core of its endeavour to realize order and intelligence, would experience the incurable fever, the sensitiveness, the emotions, the ardours, with which the nineteenth century was saturated to its inmost consciousness, and which it has laid deep in the substance of our beings.

To be consulted: A. W. Benn, *Modern England,* 1908; L. Cazamian, *Modern England,* 1911; A. Chevrillon, *Nouvelles études anglaises,* 1910; J. W. Cunliffe, *English Literature during the Last Half-Century,* 1920; R. W. Gretton, *A Modern History of the English People,* 1880–1910, 1912; Ed. Guyot, *Le Socialisme et l'évolution de l'Angleterre contemporaine,* 1913; W. H. Hudson, *A Short History of English Literature in the Nineteenth Century,* 1918; Holbrook Jackson, *The Eighteen-Nineties,* 1913; P. Mantoux, *A Travers l'Angleterre contemporaine,* 1909; L. Strachey, *Eminent Victorians,* 1919; Hugh Walker, *The Literature of the Victorian Era,* 1910; Harold Williams, *Modern English Writers,* 1890-1914, 1920.

CHAPTER II

THE REVOLT AGAINST MECHANISM

1. Philosophy: Idealism and Pragmatism.—Through the end of the nineteenth century, and the beginning of the twentieth, a powerful movement renews the spirit of philosophy; the limits of certainty are shifted; the notion of truth is transformed, and the hope of human knowledge emboldened. A revolt of the mystical, emotional, religious, and last, but not least, practical needs of the soul, overthrows or shakes the authority of universal mechanism, which rationalist thinkers had felt justified in establishing upon the general results of the sciences. The feeling of moral freedom victoriously asserts itself, along with that of the autonomy of consciousness, of its independence in relation to the laws of matter, and of the privileges through which it transcends the world of quantity; and thus, in various ways, a declining intellectual ambition is revivified. New attention is paid to metaphysics; while psychology, stirred by a secret thrill of deeper aspiration, tends towards the metaphysical plane. A diffused spirituality permeates doctrines which, dissimilar as they are in their methods or principles, still affect the emotions or the will in an analogous manner. Whether they grow out of Kant's or of Hegel's influence; or from an original fund of idealism; or gather about the specific tenets of pragmatism, and subordinate truth to man; or set up intuition as the main source of knowledge, they thoroughly harmonize in their trends, their motives, and their aims with the contemporary revival of literature and art. Springing from the same psychological demands, they constitute in the field of thought the natural counterpart of a renascent Romanticism.

This movement spreads over the whole of Europe. It even includes the American continent, where pragmatism has struck its main roots. In so far as Great Britain is concerned, the new philosophical ferment is active, manifold, and influences many personalities; it has not, however, produced there any work as outstanding by the creative vigour of the thought, and the winning charm of the manner, as that of Bergson in France. Its claims are embodied in remarkable minds, with features all their own; but their ascendancy, subdued and chiefly ethical, or in other cases technical and perceived only by the initiated, has hardly reached the general public except through the indirect effect of their teaching. On the whole, the philosophers have not lost touch with the surrounding life; the less so, as they are better aware of the claims of life itself. But none of them stands to the period in the same relationship as a Locke or a Hume did to previous ages, incontrovertibly at the intellectual centre.

The power of attraction which T. H. Green[1] possessed is an historical fact; it has left lasting tokens of itself. It has vanished, however, with the character and actual presence of the man; and we need other testimonies than his writings to realize it. His critical thought assails modern rationalism in its firmest stronghold, the work of Hume; and just as the arch-sceptic had found decisive grounds for doubt in all things, Green picks out defective links in the chain of arguments by means of which he demonstrated his thesis. His positive doctrine aims at proving that knowledge, moral activity, and nature, all imply an essential spirituality, but for which human experience could not have been organized.

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[1] Thomas Hill Green (1836–82); Professor of Moral Philosophy at Oxford; Introduction to edition of Hume's *Treatise*, 1874–75; *Prolegomena to Ethics*, 1883; *Works*, 1885, etc. See the study by Fairbrother, 1896; Nettleship (new ed.), 1906.

At the same time the need to believe, and to escape the agnostic empiricism of Mill and Spencer, leads some thinkers to seek the salvation of philosophy in the vast system which Hegel had built. Stirling[1] has explored that fabric full of darkness and mystery; from it he has brought back the enthusiasm of a discovery, and in the tone of a prophet, like that of Carlyle, he announces his revelation. By Hegel again William Wallace,[2] and Caird,[3] are inspired; the latter is bold enough to follow the stream of philosophical criticism back to its very source, the work of Kant, in order to find there, not indeed the negation, but the confirmation of idealism. And with Bradley,[4] whose thought is too individual to be traced to any master, the influence of the Hegelian philosophy is still recognizable. His doctrine is all instinct with a vigorous effort towards the affirmations of a transcendental faith; but the paths which it follows are singularly like those of scepticism. The idea of relation is predominant in the life of the mind; and this idea, involving a contradiction, disappears when analysed; there remains nothing but the one and indivisible reality which is revealed to us by concrete experience, and over which the necessities of action weave the artificial network of our concepts.

Thus while Bradley is a metaphysician, and an almost mystic one, he yet finds the justification of knowledge in the privileged needs of life. He is in agreement with the disciples of William James. As the latest and plainest expression of the revolt against the theories of intellectualism, pragmatism is the direct outcome of ancient, time-honoured instincts in the English mind. It is the natural conclusion of the groping attempts made through the centuries by a national thought trying, in the plane of philosophy, to define the paramount claims of practice, which it knew intuitively, and was resolutely bent on putting in force. But it is the American branch of the Anglo-Saxon race which has given their most authoritative form to these tendencies. Within the British Isles, pragmatism is lived by many; its speculative formula is accepted only by a few. The humanism of Schiller,[5] in deep accord with it, emphasizes in the direction of pluralism its protest against the passion of unity, that old dream of dogmatic reason.

Rationalism, however, has not given up its claim. Wiser and more supple in misfortune, it seems to gather new strength from its contact with concrete reality; the victim, in its turn, of some injustice, it is waiting for the better times which it can expect from the excess of the reaction that it has itself let loose. The part which it plays in the philosophy of to-day is modest, but not inglorious; it can still show not a few brilliant thinkers, and uncompromising minds, such as Bertrand Russell's.[6] The apparent interruption of its reign yet leaves it its silent sway over the never-ending process through which the many and average intelligences are gradually familiarized and reconciled with the relative order of the universe. Rationalism remains the very soul of science; and science, while it has been repelled from spiritual fields which it had prematurely invaded, and been thus driven back upon its own undisputed domain, yet extends its dominion there farther every day. The contemporary period, characterized as it is by an anti-intellectualist revolt, is steeped to the core in the spirit of the inevitable intellectualism.[1]

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[1] James Hutchinson Stirling (1820–1909): *The Secret of Hegel,* 1865. See study by A. H. Stirling, 1912.

[2] *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind,* 1894.

[3] Edward Caird (1835–1908): *The Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant,* 1889. See study by H. Jones and J. H. Muirhead, 1921.

[4] Francis Herbert Bradley, born in 1866: *Appearance and Reality,* 1893.

[5] F. C. S. Schiller: *The Riddles of he Sphinx,* 1891; *Humanism,* 1903.

[6] Bertrand Russell: *The Principles of Mathematics,* 1903; *The Problems of Philosophy,* 1912, etc. His doctrine may be described as realistic; it retains something of pragmatism, admits with it the plurality of experience, is distrustful of the coherence of a system, but it gives even to diversity an intellectual and irreducible character. Opposed on the whole to pragmatism, the method and spirit of which harmonized with a new Romanticism, the more recent school of neo-realism, in England as in America, seems to incline the philosophy of to-morrow towards rational theses, just as literature would seem to tend towards a classical phase. Thus the law of alternation would once again justify itself.

2. Samuel Butler.—It is in the light of this essentially dual condition of mind that the personality of a great precursor, Samuel Butler,[2] assumes its most precise significance.

His youth coincided with the main body and central part of the Victorian era; he experienced its triumphant self-confidence, its imperious order. He reacted against them; his originality found itself in rebellion. Thus stimulated, his desire for moral independence was carried to extremes; he established his life upon one exclusive principle, doubt, and the solitary search for truth. So his temper is aggressive, his irony harsh. About 1865–75, he stands as a fairly complete type of the unsocial intellectual, at war with hostile surroundings, whose prejudices he does not assail in front, but which he attacks through a series of converging manœuvres.

Nevertheless, he moves with his century. Without blunting the edge of his criticism, he applies it more temperately; or chiefly, he turns it against unexpected enemies. He had impugned religion, ethics, feelings, the irrational traditions and habits which go to the making of modern society. Now he impugns the scientists, the teachers of a truth that is new, and looks upon itself as proof against all attacks; on each of the most serious problems of the time he has a definite view, and it is not theirs. As if he were growing conscious of the fate which set him in opposition to the uncompromising rationalists, he gives fuller development to his ideas, and the shades which he thus adds to them lend them a new aspect; he assigns a limit to reason, states the rights of instinct, of intuition; a more indulgent wisdom bridges over the difference which parted him from his fellow-beings, and from their inconsistent behaviour. His philosophy, now empirical and respectful of the claims of facts, looks deeper into the riddle of life, and tends to solve it, no longer in the way of the mechanists, but in that of the idealists.

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[1] Outside of pure philosophy, in the more concrete realm of ethics, history, and criticism, the persistence of rationalism through the whole of this period may be easily detected. It is in evidence, chiefly, in the personalities and works of Frederic Harrison, Leslie Stephen, John Morley. All three, in order to understand and regulate life, society, and art, make an intellectual effort, with which they combine, more or less, the suppleness of intuitive perception, but of which they teach, by principle, the superior fecundity to their compatriots. Born all three at the beginning of the Victorian era, they survived it and continued until the twentieth century one of its major axes, the need of positive intellectuality. Frederic Harrison was the leader of the English Positivist group: *Order and Progress*, 1875; *Ruskin* (English Men of Letters), 1902; *The Creed of a Layman*, 1907, etc. Sir Leslie Stephen (1832–1904), editor of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, published: *Free Thinking and Plain Speaking*, 1873; *Hours in a Library*, 1874–79; *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, 1876–81; *The Science of Ethics*, 1882; *An Agnostic's Apology*, 1893; *The English Utilitarians*, 1900, etc.; see *Life and Letters*, by F. W. Maitland, 1906. John (later Lord) Morley (1838–1923): *Voltaire*, 1871; *Burke*, 1873; *Rousseau*, 1873; *On Compromise*, 1874; *Diderot, etc.*, 1878; *Cromwell*, 1900; *Life of Gladstone*, 1903, etc.

[2] Samuel Butler, born in the rectory of Langar in 1835, the son and grandson of clerics, studied at Shrewsbury and Cambridge, aimed at a Church career, but renounced it for conscientious reasons, and for several years became a sheep-breeder in New Zealand; read Darwin and contributed several humorous essays on his theory; his letters to his parents supplied the material for a volume of impressions, *A First Year in Canterbury Settlement*, 1863. Returning to England in 1864, he studied painting, published anonymously *The Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ . . . Critically Examined*, 1865; *Erewhon, or Over the Range*, 1872, which created a sensation; *The Fair Haven*, 1873; then under his own name, *Life and Habit*, 1877; *Evolution Old and New*, 1879; *God the Known and God the Unknown*, 1879; *Unconscious Memory*, 1880; *Luck or Cunning*, 1887; from his frequent travels in Italy he drew the matter for *Alps and Sanctuaries of Piedmont*, 1881; *Ex Voto*, 1888. *The Life and Letters of Dr. Samuel Butler*, 1896, is a biography of his grandfather, the famous pedagogue. The Homeric problem attracted him and he solved it after his fashion in *The Authoress of the Odyssey*, 1897; he translated the *Iliad*, 1898, and the *Odyssey*, 1900. In *Shakespeare's Sonnets Reconsidered, etc.*, 1899, he touched upon the Shakespearean problem. He returned to religious criticism in *Erewhon Revisited*, 1901, and died in 1902. His novel, *The Way of All Flesh*, was published in 1903, and his *Essays on Life, Art and Science* in 1904. The *Note-Books of Samuel Butler*, consisting of various notes and extracts, were published in 1912 by H. Festing Jones. See the biography of Festing Jones (*Samuel Butler, a Memoir*, 1919); the studies by Gilbert Cannan (*Samuel Butler, a Critical Study*), 1915; J. F. Harris, 1916; J. W. Cunliffe (*English Literature during the Last Half-Century*), 1920; Valéry Larbaud, 1922; M. L. Cazamian (*Roman et Idées en Angleterre*), 1923.

His work is of an unusual complexity, just as the strongly marked character of the writer is original through the variety of his features. To the very end of his career, in spite of his fertile inventiveness, he remains a solitary figure, unknown or misunderstood by the general public, anxious only to keep unhampered the sincerity of his mind, which is ever freely expressed. In some respects, he is an inventor with crotchets, an obstinate rider of hobbies; in others, his line of advance is the very path followed by the progress of contemporary thought; he adumbrates neo-Lamarckian doctrines, pragmatism, Bergsonism; and through his humour, through his full-flavoured sense of the concrete, his liking for compromise, he belongs indeed to the normal, average, and traditional manner of his race. . . .

From his early manhood he seeks for a rational religion, and the problem engrosses his thought to the end of his life. His experience loosens the ties that attach him into Anglican orthodoxy; he then subjects his former belief to an acute analysis, and makes up an exegesis for himself. At the fountain-head of Christianity is the resurrection of Christ. Scrutinizing the evidence, Butler sees the miracle vanish; unhesitatingly, he substitutes a hypothesis for the faith of the centuries: Jesus did not die on the cross; it is a living person that reappeared to the sight of the apostles. *Erewhon, The Fair Haven, Erewhon Revisited, The Way of All Flesh,* assail with incessant allusions, with deadly ironies, the Church, its doctrine, its ministers, the feelings and the practice of the faithful. We are let into the souls of ecclesiastics: they are human, weak, crushed by a mission which ought to rouse enthusiasm, and only produces torpor. To all practical purposes, churches are banks in which the pious, speculating on eternal rewards, in exchange for cash receive drafts on the hereafter. So readily does the popular mind take to the marvellous, that the most negligible nucleus of fact, the fraud of supernatural appearances, will bring about the instantaneous crystallization of a system of myths, and a cult. Founded on error, a religious organization maintains itself by means of cynicism, credulity, cowardice, interested motives.

This criticism in the manner of Voltaire is wrapped up in transparent veils, through which it bristles aggressively on every side. But along with it, and in close connection with it, there appears a respectful, liberal attitude, a sympathetic intelligence, that grows, gathers strength, and finally conquers. The heart has little share in it; Butler is never free from a touch of dryness. Still, he has a faith of his own, in which almost mystical elements are superadded to the findings of reason. A sane man should comply with the surviving of consolatory illusions; he should spiritualize the old dogmas from within. In the memory of ourselves that we leave, in the lasting fecundity of our actions, we find an immortality on this earth. The divine is immanent in the universe; and beyond the known God whom our reflection can encompass, God the Unknown dwells in the infinitude of space. Thus a link is preserved between Butler and the community of believers. He chooses a place for himself with them, among the more enlightened members of the "Broad Church." And while *Erewhon* was rife with pessimistic suggestions—as in that theme, so much like Schopenhauer, of the unborn whose pressure overcomes the aversion of the living against life—a moderate optimism now quietly predominates: it is good to live; man can be, if he likes, at peace with the world.

The reason is that the outlook of the philosopher has been singularly broadened. Butler is one of the first disciples of Darwin; but his allegiance to the transformist theory does not prevent him from making free with it; he applies it humorously to machines, and calls up the strange prospect of a world in which they will have reduced their masters to slavery. And now the purely mechanical process of natural selection does not seem to him any longer able to explain the obscure triumphs of being, in the course of development. Buffon, Lamarck, Erasmus Darwin, had at the first attempt formed juster views than the author of *The Origin of Species:* the history of the animal kingdom shows us the working of an adaptation—that elastic faculty, at the heart of which an intuitive perception is lurking and active. The main spring of this evolution is not chance, but a concrete divination, "cunning." Having thus rediscovered the path to vitalism, Butler follows it as far as the notion of a kind of "élan vital" residing in the subconscious; and his psychology turns into metaphysics: the world is composed of matter and memory; the essence of mind is to remember. Not only does physical determinism fail to govern the inner life, but this is pure activity. The struggle for existence had been his starting-point: he now stops within one easy stage of creative evolution, and of the autonomy of the will in reflective states of consciousness.

He does not dwell at such length on the social problem. In this field, caution and conformity win him over more quickly. One may say, no doubt, that property is theft; but this is an entirely theoretical view, and hardly matters. In fact, a sane man shall not interfere with the existing frame of society, the main prop and stay of order. *Erewhon* satirizes the Victorian compromise, with its timid, routine-loving passiveness; whether it is shown in its true light, hardly disguised by transposition, or the picture of a rational civilization is set up over against it. In this country of Nowhere, the Universities, "colleges of Unreason," teach the "hypothetical language," the inestimable advantage of which is, indeed, that it is good for nothing. Just as our courts will punish a culprit, that diseased person, without inquiring into the degree of his responsibility in his crime, those of the Erewhonians will punish a patient, that guilty person, without inquiring into the degree of his responsibility for his illness. The latter absurdity is no other than our own; and to such as have eyes to see, it is pregnant with a profitable lesson. From this country of Erewhon, which is no Utopia, but a satire, we shall come back with more clear-sighted minds, but not in the mood of revolutionaries. The deepest reason is to be found in the doings of instinct; from tradition, the work of an instinctive experience, every attempt at an improvement must of necessity take its start.

In the same way, morals are put in some jeopardy, but eventually made safe again. The right of society to inflict punishment is questioned; but while on one side it is curtailed, on the other it is extended. No doubt, the vulgar notion of virtues and vices does not bear scrutiny. There can be no fecundity in any self-seeking motion of the soul; every restraint likewise, every repression is fruitless. *The Way of All Flesh* is the simple pitiless relation, at times equal to Flaubert's novel, of an "ecclesiastical education," and its consequences. Still, Butler does not destroy anything that is rooted in some vital necessity. He is here a harsh critic of the family, such as society has made it; elsewhere (in *Erewhon Revisited*) he reveres it as a fact of nature. Morals may be a convention, but they are an indispensable one; what matters is to permeate them, as much as possible, with those veritable and precious balms of the hearts of all children of grace: sincerity, simplicity, goodness.

In other subjects, more remotely connected with life, the impulses of Butler's vivacious temperament have been indulged less guardedly. His portrait would lack one of its most characteristic features, were no mention made of his enthusiastic tastes, his headstrong theories: the musical sovereignty of Händel, the authoress of the *Odyssey*, etc. On the other hand, this lively personality of perception and judgments imparts a wonderful animation and zest to all that he has written about the things which he likes or admires: oratorios, paintings, churches, books, or landscapes.

For he is a writer in his own way. He could have been in the way of many others: early in life, he had written narratives in a sober but forcible key; he had aimed at imaginative and dramatic effects. Very soon, acting under scrupulous motives, and the austere principles of an intellectual, he retrenched all such intentions from his style, stripped it of everything that was not necessary to the clearest and most direct expression of ideas or facts. The process was a loss to the artist in him: the first chapters of *Erewhon*, an example of his early manner, are the work of a master in the craft of story-telling. But on the other hand, that loss was a gain to the diffusion of his thought: he reaped from his sacrifice a perfect and irresistible honesty of statement. His humour is one of the most implicit in literature, and one of the most scientific in method: its surface is not stirred by the slightest tremor; nothing reveals the hidden energy of the intention, the active simultaneous awareness of the double meaning of the words, of the dual quality of the things meant. With its somewhat severe frankness, its somewhat dry precision, this language has literary merit of a high order; it is not a means of emotion, nor of beauty; but an apt instrument of persuasion and analysis.

Butler's work is of very varied interest. Primarily an essayist, a moralist, a critic, a philosopher, he was a novelist as well, but reluctantly. The first *Erewhon* is a series of episodes and dissertations, of superior value through its irony, and altogether worthy of being compared with *Gulliver's Travels;* the second, though the author was at pains over its construction, and felt satisfied with the result, is full of a fancy yet too unreal for its logic to make much impression upon us. Only *The Way of All Flesh* can properly be called a novel; and Butler had not the courage to publish it while he lived. Its worth lies in the minute, accurate painting of manners and circumstances, in the dissection of motives; the characters themselves are unequally good, and even the best, whose truth is striking, are rather lifeless. The whole is a creation of intelligence, and of an indulgent wisdom as well; but it looks like a vast and powerful drawing in outline, not like a picture. The stamp of artificiality is recognizable there on the fruits of too analytical an inspiration; and if, ignoring the rich substance of the thought, one wishes to dwell on the pleasure of mere form, this will be chiefly found in the most spontaneous parts of Butler's works; some chapters in *Erewhon, Canterbury Settlement,* the letters, the episodes in the *Note-Books,* and those *Alps and Sanctuaries of Piedmont,* in which he opens to us such charming vistas through the land of free paganism, of sunshine, and of Christian art, which best contented all his tastes. . . .

He had, and still has, no appeal to the many; he lacks, to win them, the eloquence of the heart, the poetry of feeling. But he has, since his death, risen to his full significance: that of a fertile and creative mind. He has exercised, and still exercises, an active influence on critical intelligences, which he awakes and stimulates. His most lasting contribution is probably in the intuitions of his philosophical thought; many of his paradoxes have become accepted truths; others might be accepted as well. As compared with Shaw, who has gone farther on the same track, he remains more national, and nearer the average man: he is a conciliator at bottom, and for that very reason quite English. An intellectualist by temperament, he is empirical in his conclusions; and he has so clearly emphasized the fecundity of instinct, that he is, all things considered, among those who have done most to make its claims again honoured.

3. **Meredith.**—Very different as he is from Samuel Butler, Meredith[1] nevertheless holds a rather similar position in the history of ideas. If temperaments are summarily classified, his will be found to contain the same duality in its elements. But the proportion between these is not the same; and besides, the power of an original personality matters much more than that general analogy of substance. In all essential respects, as an artist, as a writer, as a man, Meredith stands in a strongly marked contrast with Butler.

He belongs more unquestionably to the new Romanticism. Born under the declining sway of the first, he retained the germs of Romantic intensity laid in his deeper instincts. He lived through the critical and scientific period of the century, and was permeated by its tendencies. The secret bent of his own nature fitted him for the keenest play of a susceptible and sharp intelligence; he thus found himself at one with the generation of the fifties in the cult of inner clear-sightedness. But this very cult in him has an ardour, an impassioned vehemence; it is reconciled with the fire of imagination. When the intuitive faculties of mind reawake, Meredith finds himself ready to live by their law of freedom. His worship of ideas, the queens of the mental world, is fraught with enthusiasm; reason to him is an illumination. He showers piercing arrows of satire at dullness, ignorance, routine; but he makes no difference between the passivity of unconsciousness, and that of a spurious kind of logic. The most central effort in his work is aimed against the automatic exercise of thought. An apostle of science and of salutary truth, he renews and refreshes the sources of both. He teaches the free self-possession of the soul, the energy of a valiant and cheerful heart. He must be numbered among those who in the last quarter of the nineteenth century wage war against the encroaching progress of mechanism.

He has the gift, and feels the desire, of precise, close, adequate knowledge; and the subject that he wants to know is man. But his analysis works by a series of visions and "élans"; it re-creates its object much rather than it divides it. The most delicate shades of the moral world, like those of the visible landscape, caught with the sharpest perception, are not isolated by him; he at once allows them to melt with all others into a changing play of shapes and colours, the moving fascination of which holds his gaze fast. A subtle psychologist, he is at the same time a lover of fancy, and a poet. So keen is the eagerness that carries him to instantaneous notations, that he grants but very slight care to the indispensable connections of style; his art is that of an impressionist.

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[1] George Meredith, born in 1828 in Hampshire, of English family, with Welsh and Irish ancestors, passed two years as a schoolboy in Germany, studied law, married the daughter of Thomas L. Peacock, gave up the Bar for literature and journalism, collected his poems in a volume (1851), collaborated in several periodicals, among them the *Fortnightly Review*, which he directed for some time; from 1860 onwards he was reader of manuscripts for the publishing house of Chapman and Hall. Separated from his wife in 1858, a widower in 1862, he married, in 1866, Marie Vulliamy. His first novels: *The Shaving of Shagpat*, 1856; *Farina*, 1857; *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, 1859; *Evan Harrington*, 1861; *Emilia in England* (*Sandra Belloni*), 1864; *Rhoda Fleming*, 1865; *Vittoria*, 1867; *The Adventures of Harry Richmond*, 1871, were received, on the whole, rather coldly by the critics and the public. Success and, in its train, fame came with *Beauchamp's Career*, 1876; *The Egoist*, 1877; *The Tragic Comedians*, 1880; *Diana of the Crossways*, 1885. *One of Our Conquerors*, 1891; *Lord Ormont and His Aminta*, 1894; *The Amazing Marriage*, 1895; *Celt and Saxon* (a posthumous and incomplete publication) were less popular. He also published a critical essay, *On the Idea of Comedy*, etc., 1877; short stories, *The House on the Beach*, 1877, etc.; and poems: *Modern Love*, etc., 1862; *Poems and Lyrics of the Joy of Earth*, 1883; *Ballads and Poems of Tragic Life*, 1887; *A Reading of Earth*, 1888; *Odes in Contribution to the Song of French History*, 1898; *A Reading of Life*, 1901; *Last Poems*, 1909, etc. He lived in the country, not far from London, surrounded by the cult of an élite, and died in 1909. *Works*, Memorial ed., 1909–11 (twenty-seven vols., bibliography by Esdaile); Standard ed., 1914. *Poetical Works*, ed. by Trevelyan, 1912; *Letters*, ed. by his son, 1912. See the studies by Le Gallienne, 1890; Jerrold, 1902; Legouis ("L'Égoïste de George Meredith," *Revue germanique*, July–August, 1905); Elton (*Modern Studies*), 1907; May Henderson (*George Meredith, Novelist, Poet, Reformer*), 1907; Curle (*Aspects of George Meredith*), 1908; Moffat (*George Meredith, a Primer to Novels*), 1909; Photiadès (*George Meredith: sa Vie, son Imagination, son Art*), 1910; Trevelyan (*The Poetry and Philosophy of George Meredith*), 1906; Beach (*George Meredith and the Comic Spirit*), 1912; Crees, 1918; Ellis (*George Meredith, His Life and Friends, etc.*), 1920; Galland (*George Meredith, les Cinquante Premières Années*), 1923; idem (*George Meredith and British Criticism*), 1923.

Such is the paradox of his work. Again and again it proclaims to an empirical people the duty of having intelligence and thinking clearly. But the light with which it is itself flooded is trying and difficult; it surprises, dazzles or fatigues very many readers through the brightness of its rays, and the constant intermittence of the radiating focus. It is a flashing and twinkling light. Nothing can be more distant from such a method than a matter-of-fact order, a severe sequence of ideas.

The genius of Meredith is thus stamped with a double character. Through important features, it is related to the group of Utilitarians, in the eyes of whom the most urgent task is to make life more rational; through others, and more essential ones, he belongs to the lineage of the great intuitive thinkers. His youth felt at once the influence of a prophet, Carlyle, and that of an ironist, Peacock; he owed something to his contact with the Germany of metaphysics and mysticism, and much to his elective taste for French balance and penetration. There is in him a Celtic element, of which rather too much has been made; his nature, however, is deeply English. The *Essay on Comedy* emphasizes the value of a refined ideal of artificial culture; *Richard Feverel* reminds us of the fragility of systems, of the force of instinct, and leads our ambitions back to the primitive wisdom embodied in the individual being. . . .

Thus richly provided with complexities, his work is imposing in the two fields of the novel and of poetry, less distant with him than is usually the case. The novelist developed according to his native preferences, and hardly followed any model. His period of experiments was short. The fanciful Oriental tale, *The Shaving of Shagpat,* shows an invention brilliant, and less purely verbal than one might well think; but it is not free from some exuberance—a weakness which Meredith was never to cure. The manner of Peacock crops up at times in the narratives of the first phase—down to *Beauchamp's Career*—in which the artistic intent of the writer is less deliberate. As a whole, the Meredithian novel is original, distinct, and can be legitimately studied in itself.

One should recognize in it two species, which roughly answer to the two successive parts of a long career. Each novel is organized, either round a theme of the traditional type, with a constructed plot; or about a purely internal subject. In the former case, the story more easily broadens into historical or social vistas. But whether the work keeps nearer to one or the other type, the essential object remains the study of characters. At bottom, the matter in hand is always psychological analysis. However elaborate and profuse the plot may be, and even when—as in *Vittoria*—it grows to an epic breadth, picturing the heroic struggle of a people for freedom, the main source of interest never lies in the events, nor in their material consequences. Fate, chance and circumstances are either conditions or forces at play; they contribute to raise the stage upon which is enacted the only real drama, that of consciousness, whose parts are performed by passions and wills. In its systematic idealism, the novel of Meredith is not very dissimilar to the classical notion of tragedy.

It differs from it altogether in its atmosphere. Strength and clearness of delineation are here sacrificed to a quivering intensity, which confuses the outlines, while multiplying the suggestive power of the images. The perspective, shifting and strained as it is through an ever-active eagerness, is not unlike that of dreams and visions. The picture of existence is at the same time detailed and vague, steeped in a diffused sensibility which grows animated and interested, feels merry at the sight of the unconsciousness and absurdity of human beings, exalted at the magnificent sudden appearances of nature, grand and sober, or bright and broad. The rhythm upon which those scenes are unrolled is somewhat jerky and feverish; and every aspect of the universe is interpreted poetically. It is by its poetical quality, as well, that the psychology of Meredith is characterized; it perceives the inner life as essentially in motion; it throbs with a thrill of discovery and surprise; it is keen like the sudden rush of an emotion, quick like the fluctuations of an agitated soul; it is incomparable in its power of instantaneously catching the most evanescent shades. It is thus living, just as it is concrete; the figures and equivalents which it uses to render the liquid yet interrupted flow of the stream of consciousness, impart to us the direct sensation, not the abstract idea of it. Creative as it is in the very detail of its expression, this analysis is of an order superior to that of Browning.

The characters upon which it is brought to bear are remarkable in their number, variety and substance; many of them have the minutely detailed features, the several planes of increasing depth, peculiar to the beings whom our familiar acquaintance has probed below the surface. Meredith more fondly studies the classes in which leisurely culture has given the mind the whole range and delicacy of its shades; in which manners have their full refinement, while their slightest inflections are loaded with meaning. But he has known as well how to make men and women of lower condition act, feel and speak, not without most often endowing them, it is true, with a natural distinction. Any systematic intention of realism is foreign to his temperament; he feels against that artistic method a repugnance which he has more than once expressed.

The haughty figures of noblemen—a Lord Ormont, an Everard Romfrey; the half-tone faces of indulgent sages, unpretending philosophers, men of studious or leisurely habits; the favourite creations of the humorist, the original characters, like the magnificent tailor whose memory presides over *Evan Harrington;* the young men carried away by their eagerness, whether it is selfish or more often generous, and learning to live—a Richard Feverel, a Beauchamp —preserve the clearest outline in our remembrance; and although such portraits fall naturally into groups, they are highly individualized. But it is in the delineation of women that Meredith is at his best. In this field lies for him a preference both of instinct and principle. His susceptible genius has a touch of the feminine; he champions the moral and social cause of beings to whom the law made by man was for long, he thinks, more unfair than it was pleased to realize. The series of these heroines is a chivalrous profession of faith. They often possess, with the charm of sweetness, a valiant energy, and a spiritual brightness which throws into shade the more prosaic virtues of the men. Lucy, Vittoria, Clara, Renée, Diana, Aminta, Nesta, through their freshness, their purity, their courage, and at the same time their sure, intuitive intelligence, are not unworthy of their Shakespearean sisters. The imagination which has created them has added to the treasure of human nobleness some of its most graceful and most brilliant visions.

Meredith's thought is instinct with generosity. It feels with the victims of the injustice inseparable from a social order based on authority. He carries within himself the democracy of the mind. Still, his temper is anything but that of rebellion. His humour plays freely about the existing hierarchy, without trying to destroy it. While he shows us that the son of a tailor can be a "gentleman," he is aware of all that culture owes to heredity, tradition, atmosphere. His preference as a painter and a psychologist clings to the flowers of elegant life; he accepts the material conditions of refinement, wishing only that they may be accessible to a larger number. His criticism in the sphere of society, as of character, is psychological. What he rises against is the intellectual torpor of his countrymen. He tinkles the bells of his ironical fancy in the face of slow routine-loving England; he laughs at her for being, in her timidity, afraid of ideas; he asks her to ruminate a ration of them every day. Thus seeing through the strong and the weak points of his people, its active virtues, its utilitarian narrowness, he seizes with rare acuteness the features of other national idiosyncrasies; no English observer has better understood the moral nature of France.

To the genius of French manners he turns for the example of a literary and worldly life, subjected to the supervision of a sharpened perception, of a shrewd judgment, which represses individual errors, corrects all excesses to the benefit of a balanced wisdom; and this active reason, the defender of social reality, he names the comic spirit. True comedy is thus more than a well-bred diversion; it is the very function through which the collective interplay of characters and intelligences is made manifest and lasting. It is only this spirit, thanks to its sly nimbleness, that will be able to explore the subtle intricacies of the most natural vice, the most inextricably bound up with the legitimate coherence of personality: selfishness. In this sense, *The Egoist* is indeed the most typical of Meredith's novels. No other is more definitely the study, through its depth and in all its minute shades, of a psychological problem. This study is of extreme penetration; but the analysis of Meredith is too intuitive to gain much by concentrating on a single object; it has soon exhausted the essence of an inevitable self-absorption; it hardly renews its effects but by repeating them; and Sir Willoughby is somewhat mechanical and forced. The wealth and the life of this book, which shows us a classical subject treated by the most impressionist of painters, are in accessory elements—the surroundings of the hero, the background, the energy of the imagination and the style.

The style of Meredith has its phases, and as it were its degrees. It developed, through irregular stages, towards an extreme type, that of *One of Our Conquerors*. All along its curve, it offers various aspects, either relatively normal or markedly original. When the latter predominates, we have a definite transition from the direct and constructed mode of expression, such as that English prose had known till then, to the indirect and suggestive. Romantic prose-writers—and especially De Quincey—had abundantly turned to use the poetry of rhythm and the brilliance of images. Carlyle had broken up the logical mould of the sentence, and substituted for it the strong hustling fragments of an impulsive thought. Meredith owes something to those predecessors; but his temperament as a writer is extremely individual. One might describe it as the paradoxical union of two elements: the discontinuity of a seer of visions, to whom the universe is dissolved into a shifting network of fragmentary appearances; and the subtlety of a thinker, to whom things are interesting only through the abstract relations which the mind extracts from them, and which make them for it interchangeable.

The effect of these two combined tendencies is to produce under the reader's eyes a throbbing, rapid, piercing series of intellectual flashes, each of which reveals a facet of an infinitely varied world, and casts over it a ray, not of simple light, but of luminous analogy. The expression of things is always transposed; and the transposition takes place into the tone of intelligence. The search for correspondences is the triumph of this style. In this respect, it is indeed the token of a new era—that in which reviving or enduring Romanticism mingles with the predominant intellectuality, and gives birth to Symbolism. Meredith discovers the suggestive symbols of feelings or material objects in the delicate and rare shades of ideas, as they have been fixed by the vocabulary of philosophy and analysis; and thence the strong Latin element in his style, often loaded with the polysyllabic terms of abstract thought. But not only does he use this category of signs; he knows how to work up the fund of concrete vocabulary. In each word of the latter class, he dissociates the peculiar sensation which it answers, and handles the quality thus extracted as a means of equivalence; so that it is still to the purposes of a symbolist that he employs the graphic stock of popular language. Admirable in its unexpectedness, its vigour, its compactness, that style is strained to a degree which the average mind cannot long bear; it will tire the most quick-witted or practised reader, and indeed it tends as to its natural ideal towards the far-fetched obscurity of the "metaphysical" poets of the seventeenth century. The revealing, striking illuminations, the pleasure of an ever intense intellectual activity, or of a new, fresh, humorous perception of life and things, do not make us forget the strangeness, the effort, the artifice of an incessant transcription, which we must decipher, and the key of which we sometimes miss.

This style is that of a poet of intelligence, profound, refined, indefatigable. It is no wonder that seeking for self-expression, Meredith should have found it as well in the more regular rhythm, in the more purified form, of philosophical lyricism. His verse differs from his prose through a superior density, a more open stressing of the idea. The more substantial part of his positive thought is enclosed in it, whether he still treats a dramatic theme, as in *Modern Love,* or immediately enters upon the fervent meditation, at once personal and general, which is to him poetry itself.

The doctrine of Meredith is a spiritualism which, resting on the most material reality, on the facts of experience, springs up to noble hopes. Evolution, a cosmic law, is the very principle, not the negation, of the religion of the mind. A divinity dwells in the depths of the universe; and the earth, the mother of man, is the sacred fount of health and wisdom in which he must again and again be refreshed. Read by the eyes of imagination, Nature teaches us an order, a beauty, a virtue; and in our submission to her will we shall find a joy. The pantheistic optimism of Meredith is not unlike that of Wordsworth. It is more complex, accompanied by a more vivid perception of the mysteriousness of things, and of the holy terror that thrills the *Woods of Westermain.* It finds its nourishment in elements that are not so simple, and establishes more subtle relationships between the influences of the soil or the sky, and our soul. It does not directly deal with scientific and metaphysical problems; but one feels that it has breathed the atmosphere of metaphysics and science. It takes its rise in animality, and ends as a mystic vision. Man, it teaches, is made up of his instincts, in which the blood voices its needs; of the working of his brain, which understands, accepts and judges; and of his spiritual faculties, in which there grows, through the passion of morality, the promise of a dimly descried future. The wise shall repress instinct, without losing touch with the earth, their mother; shall hearken to intelligence, ask her for the rules of social well-being, but shall rise above them to follow the heroic intuitions of the heart. Thus, within the framework of nature and the seasons, the intense hours of life will leave us not in a discordant, but in a consonant state with the universe.

This message is lofty, and in itself able to call up high and pure intellectual emotions. The poetry of Meredith lends them as an instrument the resources of metre, boldly used in the most varied forms, with uneven success, admirable achievements, less felicitous licences, but without anything that may remind us of the most prosaic jars of Browning; and he still retains besides the means of expression of his prose, at a yet higher pitch of tension. His poetry thus possesses an extraordinary concentration, and compresses an excessive sum of stimulations and challenges into a minimum number of words. It is difficult, like his prose, and indeed more difficult. It reaches beautiful effects of the same order, with a more developed musical element; it is as fond of the ample sonorousness and of the general suggestiveness of learned words. Its most elaborate pieces are not the best; it is when in contact with a simple emotion, and uttering relatively spontaneous accents, that it avoids the maze of an obscure symbolism, which it otherwise approaches dangerously, or indeed enters. Meredith has written masterpieces of a kind in which none of his contemporaries, except Rossetti, can be compared with him. But his poems will never be appreciated by more than a few; they are less accessible than his novels; and while he has expressed more of his philosophy in them, he has not poured into them any feelings of his poet's soul which his prose had not already abundantly revealed.

After having for a long time met only with a critical reception, Meredith was recognized, and at last hailed as a master; he was at the zenith of his fame on the morrow of his death. The ordinary decline has begun for him. The dogmatic opinions, the strong preferences of heart or mind, which his whimsical freedom ill succeeds in hiding, make him nowadays part and parcel of an age which was his, and against which he fought without escaping its sway. His inventions lack the artistic organization towards which the present seems to be once more returning. The extremely rare and personal quality of his genius grows to an excess in peculiarities, even in mannerisms, which the passing of time makes more prominent. He has written a very large number of wonderful pages, thrown light on the psychology of an epoch, of a nation, of man, limned unforgettable portraits; but his novels, as architectural wholes, are not built on unexceptionable plans. Many parts of his work will age the sooner for it, although the future will probably rank him with the greatest writers of his time.

4. **The Pessimists: Thomson; Hardy; Gissing.**—The idea of progress had coalesced with the rational system of the Utilitarians and the evolutionists. The maxim of the greatest happiness of the greatest number not only defines a principle or an ideal, but expressed a confident hope. From the Darwinian struggle for life, Herbert Spencer had made out the trend of civilization in its entirety towards a higher complexity which was at the same time a perfection. As a whole, the society of the mid-Victorian period accepted this philosophy, which made a prosperous age more intensely conscious of its success. The doctrine or the religion of universal mechanism had assumed a benign and optimistic look.

While the notion of necessity keeps its ascendancy, and with those very minds which most unreservedly bow to it, a reaction of sensibility takes place, however. It challenges, not indeed the absolutely binding succession of causes and effects, according to scientific determinism, but the value to man of a world thus governed. Pain is its response to a view of the universe which gave itself out as beneficent; it thus preludes to other responses, prepares the ground where they will grow, and secures a favourable atmosphere for them. The pessimism of Thomson, Hardy and Gissing acknowledges the mechanical conception of things as an intellectual truth; but it makes it incompatible with the peace of conscience, and thus, in the long run, makes it itself impossible; it is the beginning of a revolt against mechanism.

The second James Thomson[1] is a great poet. He is such naturally, is gifted

[1] James Thomson, second poet of the same name (see above, Book III. chap. ii. sect. 2), born near Glasgow in 1834, the son of a sailor, experienced great hardship from his earliest years; was brought up in a charitable institution in London; a regimental schoolmaster, he was drafted to Ireland, and there fell in love with a young girl whose premature death came as a great blow; he also made the acquaintance of Bradlaugh (see above, Book VI. ii. 4), and returning to London in 1862 associated himself with the other's apostolate of free-thinking. After several attempts, he eked out a meagre existence with his pen; a victim to melancholia and fits of intemperance, he died in hospital in 1882. He had published in the *National Reformer* polemic articles, essays, verses, notably *The City of Dreadful Night* (1874); added this poem to others (1880); and further published *Vane's Story, Weddah and Om-el-Bonain*, etc., 1881; *Essays and Phantasies* (in prose), 1881. After his death appeared *Satires and Profanities*, 1884; *Biographical and Critical Studies*, 1896, etc. *Poetical Works*, ed. by Dobell, 1895; *The City of Dreadful Night*, etc. (selected poems), 1910. See the biographies and studies by Dobell (*The Laureate of Pessimism*), 1910; Salt (*The Life of James Thomson*), 1914; Meeker, 1917.

with rare vigour, with an inborn sense of form. A son of the people, he never received the benefit of the finest culture. He makes up for it through his intuition; his rhythms, his style, instinctively aim at fullness, happiness of phrase, a sober and pure strength; they often reach their aim. But their merit is not of absolute solidity; the art has its flaws, the artist's taste its deficiencies. The wonder is that his talent, self-taught as it was, should have tended to true perfection, through the errors of a superficial Romanticism, the chances of a cruel and disturbed existence.

He was born for joy, and did not seek his tragic fate out of a secret readiness. He tasted, and even sang, the pleasures of life. If his inspiration soon grew darker, and if he became the poet of pessimism, it was under the shock of incurable moral suffering, and in consequence of a self-abandonment of the will, of periodic fits of intemperance, for which he was, doubtless, partly responsible, but to which he was driven as well by organic heredity.

His work is more varied than could be augured from the painful obsession betrayed by his greatest poem. He has delightful outpourings, light graces or eager raptures. *Sunday up the River,* a modern idyll, mingles touches of delicate dreaminess with a frankly plebeian humour. *He Heard Her Sing* is an ecstatic piece with the broad, strong sweep of an organ "largo." *Weddah and Om-el-Bonain,* an Oriental tale, full of Shelley's influence, along with its blemishes inlays tender, passionate images in charming lines.

But one central theme is the outstanding feature of Thomson's work: the pain of living, and the sombre majesty of despair. This motive is sketched in *To Our Ladies of Death,* receives in *Insomnia* a late and strikingly vivid variation, and is fully developed in *The City of Dreadful Night,* a series of symbolic visions.

The symbol is the image of a city of darkness, where the beings set apart by the loss of every hope dwell together. It dissolves like an illusion of night in the light of day; but in the gloom of the grieving soul it is ever built up again; for its architecture is that of dreams; it is made of the fabric of our imaginings. Down its streets, furrows of heavy dusk, ghosts move, mingled with the living; and on the banks of the river of suicides which flows through it, in the dark temple where the gospel of annihilation is preached to human suffering, the inmates of the city obey their obsessing impulses, or whisper to one another the secrets of their sorrowful fraternity. The various aspects of the bitter renunciation to life, to joy, are called up in scenes or meditations whose strong concentrated power strikes our imaginations with an unforgettable nightmare.

Thomson found, thanks to his instinctive art, the fit means for the full realization of his poetical fancy: stanzas of varied texture, borrowed from the verse-writers of the past, but all stamped anew with the imprint of his personality, directed towards a converging effect by the similitude of their tone—the same thoughtful amplitude, accompanied and confirmed by the sounding echo of the rhymes; and a language instinct with dense, harsh energy, now and then relieved by the biblical or oratorical solemnity of archaisms or Latin adjectives.

His personality has other aspects; there was in him a polemic of free thought and democratic action, sincere, but of inferior literary quality; an essayist; a critic with just, vivid perceptions, who has known how to recognize new merits, and to renew the appreciation of old ones; and a prose-writer who displays, like the poet, an accurate discriminating sense of the values of words.

With Thomas Hardy,[1] the reaction of a robust nature against a philosophy that was too easily self-satisfied assumes the character of one of those complete breaks, through which men of energetic temperament will stand up against their times. In some respects there is in him a Rousseau, as extreme in his revolt, but different in his self-mastery, his massive dignity, his admixture of calm with bitterness. Not only does he deny the hope of a happiness founded upon the progress of critical reason; it is the whole of modern civilization that he condemns, and his sore heart seeks, as a wounded animal would, the shelter of the most primitive and untouched earth.

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[1] Thomas Hardy, born near Dorchester in 1840, prepared himself for the profession of architect, and pursued it, then gave it up for literature in 1867. He first essayed his skill in verse, then in the novel or short story: *Desperate Remedies,* 1871; *Under the Greenwood Tree,* 1872; *A Pair of Blue Eyes,* 1873; *Far from the Madding Crowd,* 1874; *The Hand of Ethelberta,* 1876; *The Return of the Native,* 1878; *The Trumpet Major,* 1880; *A Laodicean,* 1882; *Two on a Tower,* 1882; *The Mayor of Casterbridge,* 1886; *The Wood-*

Brought up to the profession of architect, he receives a mixed culture, in which precise notions, the sense of volumes and of equilibrium, are joined to a process of artistic refining; he gets at the same time acquainted with the material structure of the world, and with the æsthetic character of its outlines. To this apprenticeship of intelligence and sensibility, he joins the awakening of imagination through the influence of history. The deeper foundations of his thought are those of the Victorian mind: positive data, a respect for science, curiosity as to the cosmic and human past. Upon this basis, others about him were raising the cult of omnipotent evolution, of fruitful industry, of pacific democracy. His original instinct, after a quick transition, settles in a coherent system of directly opposed beliefs, which at times are formulated, at times remain latent, and are only revealed through powerful concrete expressions.

He accepts science, and feels its spell, but joylessly. His tastes lead him away from the fever and fret of industry. A meditative and solitary man, he keeps in harmony with the austere though verdant countryside of Dorsetshire, where he had spent his boyhood; and it is there, in retirement, that his life develops, uneventful except for the stages of his work. His books almost ignore the new facts of the present-day world; their background is the eternal framework of the hills and the moors; all their vistas open upon those simple, unchanging realities, the neighbourhood of which throws light on the true relationship between the universe and man.

This relationship unites two terms of rather similar essence, but of very unequal power. Hardy's philosophy grows out of reflection and experience before he is acquainted with Schopenhauer; from an early time, he feels an obscure volition in the depths of things, and curbs our individual destinies under a law greater than ourselves. At a later stage, he readily adopts the theory of an immanent will seeking unconscious ends through a blind striving. Everywhere in his novels human beings appear to us crushed by a superior force; that of nature, at first, and of an indifferent, so most often a hostile chance; then, that of the errors implied in our own desires. Whether his creed is fatalism or determinism, he is haunted by the vision of necessity. He grasps it grandly, like a tragic poet, and illustrates it with unwearied persistence.

As an artist, he finds himself soon enough, but he shows regressive phases, and a rather sinuous line of development. His novels can be divided into groups, from one to another of which, on the whole, he passed. The first are of a

landers, 1887; *Wessex Tales,* 1888; *The Waiting Supper,* 1888; *Tess of the D'Urbervilles,* 1891; *A Group of Noble Dames,* 1891; *Life's Little Ironies,* 1894; *Jude the Obscure,* 1896. The success of the earlier idylls was kept up, then grew with *Tess,* but the welcome given to *Jude* discouraged the novelist; he published nothing more save *The Well-Beloved* (which had already appeared in a periodical), 1897; *A Changed Man,* etc., 1913. The poet came into the front rank with his *Wessex Poems,* etc., 1898; *Poems of the Past and Present,* 1902; *The Dynasts* (Part I., 1904; II., 1906; III., 1908); *Time's Laughing-Stocks,* etc., 1909; *Satires of Circumstance,* etc., 1914; *Moments of Vision,* 1917. *Works,* Wessex ed.; Pocket ed. (Macmillan); *Collected Poems,* 1919. See the studies by L. Johnson (*The Art of Thomas Hardy*), 1894; new ed., 1923; Hedgcok (*Thomas Hardy, Penseur et Artiste*), 1911; Lea (*Thomas Hardy's Wessex*), 1913; Abercrombie, 1912; H. Child, 1916; L. W. Berle, 1917; H. C. Duffin (*Thomas Hardy, a Study of the Wessex Novels*), 1916; M. L. Cazamian (*Roman et Idées en Angleterre*), 1923; J. W. Beach (*The Technique of Thomas Hardy*), 1923.

lighter or more traditional build, showing either a predominance of the plot (*Desperate Remedies, The Hand of Ethelberta*, etc.), or the traces of a fanciful invention in the action and the characters (*A Pair of Blue Eyes, The Trumpet Major*, etc.). The essential originality of his temperament is included in half a dozen books of a more deliberate realism, of a closer psychology, where under a varying, but gradually dimmer light, the more and more dramatic struggle between man and the evil in things is waged (*Far from the Madding Crowd, The Return of the Native, The Mayor of Casterbridge, The Woodlanders, Tess of the D'Urbervilles, Jude the Obscure*).

They all are novels of provincial, and even rustic life; for if the scene is sometimes shifted from the country to the towns, these are sleeping boroughs or cities, flooded by the influences of the fields. Oxford, the great University, which lifts its towers and spires on the horizon, is to the north the boundary of the agricultural country, hardly eaten into by the fever of modern manners, whose heart is Hardy's own Dorsetshire, and for which he has kept its old name of "Wessex." Through these lands of memory, where hills will bear Roman camps, and where barrows will conceal even more ancient remnants, the fates are unrolled of heroes placed in a lower or middle condition. The most frequent types are those of peasants and professional men, the latter having themselves risen from the people. Hardy has a preference for characters of a sturdy and painful intellectuality, won over the hard heredity of a family rooted to the soil.

His plots are not simple. They grow out of elementary passions: ambition, greed, love, jealousy, the thirst for knowledge; and the springs which move them are psychological. More and more as he progresses in his career, Hardy tends to shift the construction of his novels to the inner world; he writes a moral drama, shows us a conflict of contradictory wills, guided themselves by feelings. But the development of these conflicts is crossed at every moment by accidents which interrupt them. Ironical, malevolent, fatal chance is as it were an invisible third party in all the relationships of human beings; now it seems to express an obscure cruelty lurking in the universe; now, in a more philosophical guise, it is the experimental revelation of laws which individuals in their self-deception ignore, and against which probability demands that they should be some day crushed. In this latter sense, chance becomes the chastisement of the unavoidable selfishness of every life. Whether one aspect or the other is predominant, the repeated working of that inimical luck is largely responsible for the tragic atmosphere which Hardy's heroes succeed but rarely in escaping.

And yet theirs are strong-willed souls. The solitude and concentration of country habits have saved them from the dispersion and constant wear that eat up the town-dweller. There are some among them whose vitality has been impaired by reflection, by art, and the exhausting work of the intelligence; but their energy dies hard, and the deadly strain is a long time conquering them. Clym Yeobright, Henchard, Jude, are three different aspects of that rustic robustness, struggling against the experience of pain or the disease of thought. The women of Hardy are closer to the instinctive stage, more elementary as it were in good or evil; he has wanted to make them either the tools of the life-force, or the victims, easily overcome, of a cruel fate rendered heavier by the sensibility of their hearts.

However interesting they may be—and many among them are original figures, with strong unforgettable features—the characters of Hardy do not bear the stamp of a faultless art. They are laboriously constructed, and from the outside; their creator is not under the immediate spell of intuition. In this field he is the architect rather than the poet; the building is sound, but its frame and joints are visible. There occur, in the development of these beings, sudden crises and breaks, angles one might say, where one feels an arbitrary decision rather than an inevitable growth. Quite other characteristics prevail in the descriptions and the painting of the background. There it is that Hardy is most certainly and constantly inspired.

From his earliest works, he tried his hand at the delineation of landscape; and while he at first added nothing new to the theme, he showed freshness, an accuracy of touch and tone which bespeaks an intimate knowledge of the country. The idyllic scenes in *Far from the Madding Crowd* are worthy of being compared with the most genuine pictures that English prose had yet produced in that line. With *The Return of the Native, The Woodlanders, Tess,* we come upon effects more powerful and of a rarer quality, aimed at with a sure and certain skill. A great poet of nature there freely displays an exceptional gift for description, which owes a vast range to the perception both of fine shades and of vast solemn harmonies.

What strikes us first in these pictures is their precision. Hardy has the acute discriminating senses of an observer who takes in things with an attention at the same time analytical and impassioned. His records of impressions owe nothing to literature; they are wholly direct, and grow out of the object itself; as they formulate what only the most impressionable peasants would subconsciously register, they extend our knowledge at many points. No one before him had caught, or at least expressed through words, the peculiar rustling of the wind in the tiny bells of dried heather blossoms. Such extremely delicate perceptions, however, are not so striking as are some broad, strong intuitions, in which imagination has its share. The special aspect of particular regions, the picturesque essence of an individual landscape, are seen and rendered with unfailing felicity. And just as those creations reveal the deepest tendencies in the writer's temperament, his tastes are secretly guiding the preferences of his sight. Hardy has most fondly described the elementary, grand and sad aspects of nature; the land which appeals to him most is that which is freest from human dwellings; he loves the sea, but does not often describe it, not finding himself sufficiently familiar with its moods; he loves more to paint the woods, where the seasons go through the infinitely varied circle of their changes far from all profane onlookers; the vales, the rich pastures, the sober hills of his native district; the bare uplands where the furrow of a Roman road runs straight and empty to the horizon; and the gloomy vastness of the moor, in which every living being vanishes, as if swallowed up in the depth of the centuries whose image is called up by its immobility.

Description, when it reaches this degree of symbolic breadth, is loaded with philosophy. Hardy's gaze perceives time as well as space. The past of the world casts a spiritual but visible shadow over the surface of a globe grown old, where the brightest rays are shorn of the gaiety of young light. The ashes of the dead fertilize the mould, and give the flowers their beauty; the ploughshare brings up the tools, the arms of the first masters of a soil which we believe ours, and whose aspect is to us familiar and reassuring, because we are not acquainted with the lugubrious dramas that are hidden in it. To see spring bloom or autumn ripen, is to call up within the only scenery that is unchanged the long history of mankind, still galled by the same passions, overwhelmed by the same fate, vainly seeking a cure for its anguish in an aimless agitation. Hardy's pessimism is not only a way of thinking; lived by his most instinctive sensibility, it imbues all his visions; it is the very essence of his admirable poetry of nature.

His last novels are the most hopeless. What had been a general bent of mind is accentuated here by coming into contact with moral or social problems. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* calmly calls up the sufferings which the inequality of the sexes and the hasty indifference of the law add to the evils that the flesh inherits. *Jude the Obscure* is the most powerful of the books in which the fatigue of modern vitality has expressed, exemplified and justified itself in principle. Hardy here renounces whatever alleviation, were it a sad one, the attention paid to landscape brought to the bitter spectacle of human pains. He draws closer to complete realism, free from all violence, but destitute as well of all secret leaning to indulgence, than does any of his contemporaries; and the example of French naturalism is probably not without some influence upon this change. The story of an intellectual vocation, struggling against the yoke of fleshly appetites, against the open or hidden hostility of a materialist world, and the inner doubt which cripples all effort, rises to the height of the most sincere art. The style, however, unable to thoroughly emulate such moral courage, reveals some deficiencies; it possesses no spontaneous perfection, no easy rhythm, and as it grows heedless of beauty, recedes too far away from it. But in spite of its slow progress, and somewhat heavy material, this work is thrilling with the humanity which permeates it to the core. It offers us in the character of Sue a deeply studied and prophetic portrait of a girl in whom the conflict between brain and instinct is endued with the unstable charm of complexity. With this book Hardy took his leave of the novel, a literary kind whose limits his dismayed public seemed to signify he had stretched too far.

He has since published hardly anything but poems. With him, the unity of temperament which makes the poet and the prose-writer one man is exceptionally obvious. The difference in manner is attenuated by the deep analogy of inspiration, by marked and characteristic habits of thought and language. The expression in the poems, however, is more compact than that in the novels; restrained within narrower bounds, it acquires a peculiar involution; it has to lend itself, not without a perceptible strain, to a measure which has not been created at the same time, and for it. Rarely do we meet with an inevitable rhythm, with pieces whose music is inseparable from their suggestion. Hardy has incorporated in his novels some fragments which had first been written in verse; many of his poems, conversely, are not essentially distinguishable from prose. Beauty springs here from the powerful concentration, the economy of words, the severe choice of epithets and images; from a vocabulary rough and singularly rich in associations, through its large number of old Saxon roots, and of words racy of the soil. Abounding as it is in striking phrases, whose meditative echo long reverberates within us, this austere poetry is one of the most vigorous and personal in modern English literature.

It sings the same poignant, bitter and restrained feelings as live at the core of the novelist's tragic tales; and as it sings them with a more audacious directness, the poems of Hardy yet more frankly reveal the secret of his pessimism. They give us the reaction of his thought to events, discreet hints as to his sentimental life, a summary account of his readings and his travels; they are a precious document towards his moral biography. The abhorrence of war, the manifold consciousness of human misery, the moving metaphysical realization of an unknown God and an impassive universe, the painful thrill of time, the curiosity and obsession of past centuries, are with a rich humour the main aspects of this philosophical lyricism.

The philosophy which animates it, and which already found its favourite stimulus in history, has expressed itself more fully in the original form of a dramatic epic poem founded on history. *The Dynasts* is a work of the broadest scope, imposing through its general conception, through the framework of ideas which supports the actual fate of nations and kings, the fight between Napoleon and Europe, and, beyond that earthly battlefield, the symbolic impressions of supernatural onlookers. The effort is of unequalled boldness; the most precise fact in it mixes with the freest imagination, the rigid outline of an event with the fluidity of mystic vision; the effect as a whole is strange and grand. Long stage directions in prose now and again break the lines. Here once more, the manner has not the easy suppleness of happy art; it hardens into rough edges and irregular rhythms. The force of an inner glow of ironical and pathetic ardour, which heats, animates and raises such a mass, though it fails to melt it into one pure and coherent alloy, awakes a respectful and serious admiration in the reader. The characters, while they are not all studied with equal care, are interesting, even if some of them can hardly be accepted historically. The light that falls from heaven upon this succession of moving scenes sets off eloquent contrasts and brings out vivid climaxes among them. The voices of the invisible witnesses draw the lesson of bitter resignation, which Hardy has been ever teaching, from that series of catastrophes governed by an indifferent Fate; but here, a glimmer of hope dawns in the darkness; as some of the poems had already hinted, the blind force that drives the world seems to be gradually growing conscious; and we are allowed to look forward to a future when a less insensible Will may preside over our destiny.

Nothing is more instructive than to compare Gissing[1] with Dickens. In spite of striking analogies, their works have quite different tones. The unavoidable oppositions between personal artists contribute much to this difference; but something is due as well to the distinct tempers of two successive ages. Gissing, like his revered master, early received the stamp of social suffering; his youth underwent severer trials. Bitterness sank to the core of his nature, and permeated all his fibres; it became the very food of his imagination. If the outlook of his thought was thus darkened, while Dickens had preserved his courageous cheerfulness, the reason is first that there was not in him the triumphant surge of humour, the will, and the strength, to create joy by means of an invincible illusion. But on the other hand the atmosphere of his days fostered the genius which inclined him to pessimism. He inhaled the doctrine of Schopenhauer, and assimilated it; he was confirmed in his realism by the example of writers whom science had marked with its austere stamp. It is certain that he felt the influence of the French naturalistic movement—from Flaubert to Zola. A contemporary of Maupassant, he infused like him, into the pitiless determination to see and to point out the truth, the sadness of a closing century, exhausted with cruel certitude, afflicted with the profound starvation of its most spiritual desires.

Dickens had depicted evil in order to seek, in order to announce its cure; each abuse called for a reform; behind the selfishness of the wicked, the charity of the good shone, contagious and reassuring. Gissing describes the diseases of society without any hope of curing them. He believes neither in the philanthropy of the rich, nor in the revolt of the poor. The career of a plebeian agitator (*Demos*) teaches us the vanity of the socialist dream. There do exist some generous and pure beings; but few they are, and unhappy, the victims of a society built on greed, indifference or hatred. This sombre philosophy inspires to the end a work and a life which in their last stage show a perceptibly relaxed strain, without ever being freed from sadness.

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[1] George Robert Gissing, born at Wakefield in 1857, studied at Owens College, Manchester, was destined for the teaching profession. An imprudent marriage ruined his career; he experienced great privations in America and in London; from 1880 onwards he lived by giving lessons and performing tasks for publishers, in a state of poverty which only increased with time. His writings met with no success at first, then won the esteem of an élite. His novels include: *Workers in the Dawn,* 1880; *The Unclassed,* 1884; *Isabel Clarendon,* 1886; *Demos,* 1886; *Thyrza,* 1887; *A Life's Morning,* 1888; *The Nether World,* 1889; *The Emancipated,* 1889; *New Grub Street,* 1891; *Born in Exile,* 1892; *Denzil Quarrier,* 1892; *The Odd Women,* 1893; *In the Year of Jubilee,* 1894; *Sleeping Fires,* 1895; *The Whirlpool,* 1897; *Our Friend the Charlatan,* 1901; *Veranilda,* 1904, etc.; short tales: *Human Odds and Ends,* 1898, etc.; travel impressions and essays: *By the Ionian Sea,* 1901; *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft,* 1903; critical studies: *Charles Dickens,* 1898; *Forster's Life of Dickens,* abridged and revised, 1903, etc. After a second marriage, also unhappy, he found a devoted and considerate mate in a Frenchwoman, and died, despite her efforts to save him, in the Pyrenees in 1903. See Swinnerton, *George Gissing,* 1912; May Yates, *George Gissing,* 1922; M. L. Cazamian, *Roman et Idées en Angleterre,* 1923.

Gissing's best novels are those in which he has most strictly focussed his attention on the classes whose intimate knowledge and haunting horror he preserved within himself; whether the poverty studied is that of the London slums (*Demos, The Nether World*), or of starving writers (*New Grub Street*); or again, crossing the limit between the two worlds, he relates the adventurous career of a son of the people who, through no other means but his ambitious intelligence, wins acceptance for himself among the elect (*Born in Exile*). On one occasion, he was attracted by a special problem, the woman question, and treated it from the point of view of the middle class (*The Odd Women*). With varying concentration and intensity, the same heavy atmosphere hangs over those tales; they are, as it were, the several episodes of one harsh prose epic, that of the suffering implied in the social order, or in human nature.

No one has drawn a more striking, nor in some respects a more exact image, of the joyless surroundings among which the lives of the most numerous class are set in London. His realism is only partly rooted in the instincts of his nature; in him the Romanticism of his early years is quivering, still full of life, under the discipline of a will which denies itself the right to feel, because feeling is the refuge of the weak, and entices the mind away from truth. But if realism with him is not part and parcel of his most spontaneous artistic impulses, it is put into practice by a reflective intelligence; it is remarkably robust and sincere. While it is courageous, it is laboured as well; and this conscientiousness is not free from a touch of heaviness. The picture of a mediocre reality is made up of deliberate strokes of the brush, with painstaking precision; each stroke shows us its object with an accuracy which reveals at the same time the correct vision of clear-sighted eyes, and the determination of a mind which has exorcized all fallacies from its outlook. A strong, crushing impression of infinitely sad truth emanates from those images; the sadder, as even the poetry of an inverted idealization, of a dramatic intensifying of ugliness, is almost nowhere to be found in them.

It is not always wanting, however; Gissing sometimes, in spite of himself, or willingly, indulges in imaginative renderings. As if he confessed the bankruptcy of that absolute realism which is the gospel of one of his heroes (Biffen, in *New Grub Street*), and the unbearable monotony of a perspective ever deprived of all human reactions, he will now and then interpret reality, compress it into shortened views, magnify it into symbols; he discreetly pours out upon it the passion with which his soul is overflowing. Then it is that the drab objectivity of the story assumes its full value; it throbs with a moving eloquence, and the grey atmosphere is shot through with tragic gleams.

Gissing's heroes are studied patiently, conscientiously, from the outside, with an uneven penetration, which often reaches only the largest springs of their moral being, but even then reconstructs its mechanism with logical accuracy; which sometimes again, thanks to a more direct intuition, made up of sympathy or hatred, and pregnant with the tacit avowals of a wounded personality, creates characters of a profound or subtle truth. No one of these persons is the author himself; but several are connected by sore fibres with his feeling of self. The Godwin Peak of *Born in Exile*, the Reardon and the Biffen of *New Grub Street*, the Sidney Kirkwood of *The Nether World*, owe part of their convincing power to the bitter experience of the unjust decrees through which nature and society will crush noble ambitions; in the same way, a Jasper Milvain owes his truth to the author's acute perception of the easy virtues through which some lax consciences believe they deserve their brilliant rewards, and do deserve them in the eyes of the world, thus depriving a scrupulous and obscure rival of the last revenge which his pride could expect, the pleasure of despising them.

The interrelations of those beings, the succession of their attitudes and acts, the words that pass between them, obey rhythms more firm and laboured, here again, than they are quick, elegant or facile. The dialogues in Gissing are halfway between the reality of spontaneous speech, and the fiction of a thought that explains itself to us. His style is vigorous, rich in suggestions; capable, in its restraint, of an impressive sobriety; incapable, on the other hand, of the crystallized purity of supreme art; subject as well, sometimes, to that slight excess in the use of learned terms which betrays a culture conscious of having to conquer a social prejudice, and wishing to show itself. In spite of his occasional efforts as a destroyer of shams, Gissing, in fact, is no dissenter from the traditional values; his political instincts make him side with order; the enthusiasms of his mind choose their objects in the field of classical humanism.

It is to these aspects of his inner being that the other parts of his work should be traced back: the novels either purely fanciful, or instinct with a freer imagination, and a more temperate realism; the sketches of travel to the shores of the "Ionian Sea," in which the sense of landscape is refined and developed to a high artistic quality; the critical or personal essays, such as the study of Dickens, and the *Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*. These writings testify to a felicitous variety of talents, in an author who might seem condemned to a cheerless monotony.

His premature death prevented Gissing from reaping the full benefit of his gifts. He might have still renewed himself. But probably he had already stamped his personality most durably on the novel. He will live as the most sincere expression, through his strong and his weaker features, of one of the darkest moments in modern social thought.

On the contrary, with another realist, inclined as well to painful meditation, the sincerity of a tender conscience did not exclude resignation to life. The pessimism of Hale White[1] is a discreet flavour, so much mingled with charity, and even with love, that its bitterness tends to vanish. His creations have neither the abundance nor the strength of those of Gissing; they are restricted to a narrow circle. The range of one class, the dissenting lower middle; of one psychological problem, the conflict of the craving for truth with faith, with action and happiness, circumscribes them all. But within this modest field, the drama which is enacted is that of human destiny, in the shape which it owes to the spiritual sufferings of our age. The *Autobiography* and the *Deliverance* of Mark Rutherford hardly relate anything but the experience of a soul that gives itself away altogether, an experience connected by the simplest incidents with some delicately painted episodic characters; the poetry or the nobleness of those tales springs from their intimate idealism. After the torments of religious doubt, they tell the assuagement which the will to goodness may find in the concentration on the proximate duties of life. Other studies by the same writer, more objective, have not the poignant intensity or the vivid appeal of the former. Those two books, written under a fictitious name by the most secretive of authors, have created a moral type, and exemplified in its unforgettable image the anguish, perhaps the cure, of many minds.[1]

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[1] William Hale White, born at Bedford in 1830, prepared to enter the ministry of his sect, but was debarred on account of his too free ideas on biblical inspiration; he published pseudonymously *The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford*, 1881; *Mark Rutherford's Deliverance*, 1885; *The Revolution in Tanner's Lane*, 1887; *Miriam's Schooling*, 1890, etc.; under his own name, a translation of Spinoza (1877); a study on Bunyan, 1905; the elements for a real story of his life: *Pages from a Journal*, etc., 1900; *The Early Life of Mark Rutherford, by Himself*, 1913. He died in 1913. See A. E. Taylor, "The Novels of Mark Rutherford," *English Association Essays and Studies*, vol. v., 1914; M. L. Cazamian, *Roman et Idées en Angleterre*, 1923.

To be consulted: Gilbert Cannan, *Samuel Butler, etc.*, 1915; *Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. xiii. chaps. iv. xiv.; vol. xiv. chap. i.; M. L. Cazamian, *Roman et Idées en Angleterre*, 1923; J. W. Cunliffe, *English Literature during the Last Half-Century*, 1920; O. Elton, *Survey of English Literature*, 1830–80, 1920; A. Fouillée, *Le Mouvement idéaliste et la Réaction contre la Science positive*, 1896; R. Galland, *George Meredith, etc.*, 1923; E. Leroux, *Le Pragmatisme américain et anglais*, 1922; J. Sully, *Pessimism*, new ed., 1891; J. M. Trevelyan, *The Poetry and Philosophy of George Meredith*, 1906; J. Wahl, *Les Philosophes pluralistes d'Angleterre et d'Amérique*, 1920; H. Walker, *The Literature of the Victorian Era*, 1910; H. Williams, *Modern English Writers, 1890–1914*, 1920.

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[1] Pessimistic inspiration, mingled with other veins—the influence of Pre-Raphaelite refinement and disquietude, chiefly—rises to the surface in the work of two other poets, whose too easy talent is not without personality: Arthur O'Shaughnessy (1844–81): *Poems*, selected and edited by W. A. Percy, 1923. P. B. Marston (1850–87): *Song-tide, etc.*, 1871; *Wind Voices*, 1883, etc.

CHAPTER III

THE NEW ROMANTICISM

1. Swinburne.—Just as Neo-Classicism with Matthew Arnold was steeped in a persistent Romanticism, with Swinburne[1] Neo-Romanticism includes within one and the same ardour the most diverse inspirations, among which is to be found the impassioned worship of Greek and classical beauty. The author of *Atalanta in Calydon* and *Poems and Ballads* yet holds, like that of *Merope,* a distinct place in the development of literature. Against the composite background upon which a century saturated with actions and reactions thenceforth traces the successive phases of taste, he stands out with the vigorous outline of a dominant characteristic. Through his immediate connections he is linked with the more refined aspects of Victorian poetry; the direct influence of Pre-Raphaelitism is upon him; but he goes beyond this movement, or rather he extends its limits. A broader and fuller intensity, an eagerness of desire which recalls Shelley's youthful enthusiasm, an uncompromising audacity in revolt, all point, at the time when the Victorian feeling of balance is beginning to question itself, to the renascence of an avowed Romanticism.

No less than he prolongs an impulse, Swinburne is a precursor as well. He continues the generation of Byron, Shelley, Keats, Landor. His themes most often seem to echo theirs: the exaltation of freedom, of the efforts of oppressed nationalities—the Italy of Mazzini and Cavour being substituted for Hellas; hostility to authoritative religions, the negation of dogma, pantheistic leanings; the love of sensuous beauty, of the Middle Ages, and of pagan civilizations. To that sheaf of tendencies, he adds a few more novel ones, through which he betokens the spirit of the declining century: a rebellion against the rule of Puritanism, and against the subjection of letters to the tone of social life; the frank admission of passional subjects in art. The Romanticism of 1820 had already foreshadowed that endeavour; next, among the aims of the Pre-Raphaelites, the idealization of sensuality had found a place, and Rossetti was to be denounced shortly after.[1] But the *Poems and Ballads* of 1866 opened through Victorian reticence the breach which, gradually widened, eventually let in the flood of decadent literature.

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[1] Algernon Charles Swinburne, born in London in 1837, studied at Eton and Oxford, and published without success two dramas of Shakespearean inspiration: *The Queen Mother* and *Rosamond* (1860). Two dramas of a different spirit, *Atalanta in Calydon,* and *Chastelard* (1865), were not unnoticed. The first was followed at a later date by *Erechtheus* (1876); the second by *Bothwell* (1874) and *Mary Stuart* (1881). The *Poems and Ballads* of 1866, meanwhile, provoked a scandal. Swinburne identified himself with the Pre-Raphaelite movement, and enthusiastically upheld the cause of Italian independence (*A Song of Italy,* 1867; *Songs before Sunrise,* 1871). From 1879 until his death (1909) he lived in retirement near London with his friend, Theodore Watts-Dunton, the critic and poet. His further publications include collections of verse or poems: *Songs of Two Nations,* 1875; *Poems and Ballads,* Second Series, 1875; idem, Third Series, 1889; *Songs of the Springtides,* 1880; *Studies in Song,* 1880; *Tristram of Lyonesse,* 1882; *A Century of Roundels,* 1883; *A Midsummer Holiday,* 1884; *Astrophel,* 1894; *The Tale of Balen,* 1896, etc.; dramas: *Marino Faliero,* 1885; *Locrine,* 1887; *The Sisters,* 1892; *Rosamund, Queen of the Lombards,* 1899. In prose he wrote: *William Blake, a Critical Essay,* 1868; *Essays and Studies,* 1875; *George Chapman, a Critical Essay,* 1875; *A Note on Charlotte Brontë,* 1877; *A Study of Shakespeare,* 1880; *Miscellanies,* 1886; *A Study of Victor Hugo,* 1886; *A Study of Ben Jonson,* 1889; *Studies in Prose and Poetry,* 1894, etc. His French work, for the most part unpublished, is considerable. *Poems,* 1904; *Tragedies,* 1905–6; *Selections* (ed. by himself), 1887. See the biography by Gosse, 1917; studies by Woodberry, 1905; Elton (*Modern Studies*), 1907; Richter (*Swinburne's Verhältniss zu Frankreich und Italien*), 1911; Thomas (*Algernon Charles Swinburne, a Critical Study*), 1912; Drinkwater (*Swinburne, an Estimate*), 1913; Welby (*Swinburne, a Critical Study*), 1914; Henderson (*Swinburne and Landor*), 1918; de Reul (*L'Œuvre de Swinburne*), 1922; MacInnes (*L'Œuvre française de Swinburne*), in preparation.

Here, again, Swinburne shows more initiative than invention. He is no creator. Whereas English opinion since the Revolution of 1789 had grown generally hostile to influences from France, he yields to them. An assimilative temperament, he welcomes from his earliest years the lessons of the Ancients, of the Elizabethans, of the Romanticists; he accepts as well those of the contemporary French writers. He is a devoted admirer of Victor Hugo, worships him as one of the greatest masters of language; he relishes the piquant graces of Théophile Gautier. From Baudelaire, however, he receives the most subtle teaching. Through his lyrical work there runs a vein of conscious morbidity; the frenzy of passion, the proud bitterness of satiety, the tragic or sinister aspects of destruction, lend it many of its characteristic accents. In a somewhat diluted and attenuated form, one catches there the echoing tones of Baudelaire's pessimism.

Of all those mingled elements the temperament of Swinburne is made up. The art to which it tends is a Romanticism enriched and altered by the psychological experience and the intellectuality of half a century; it is Symbolism, brilliant examples of which were being offered him in their several manners by Gautier, Baudelaire and the Victor Hugo of the Guernsey period. His poetry is all instinct with an effort to seize the inner and not only the apparent meaning of natural forms; to listen with a tranquil and meditative soul to their silent voice; to render emotions, in the same way, by transferred expressions, more interesting than direct ones; and to turn nature into a manifold evocation of the great riddles of mind. Suggestion is the indispensable and most efficient instrument of such an art; for it utilizes the indirect elements of significance which belong to words, as to images; and thus the aspects of nature, and the sounds of the words that express them, become the resources of a new technique, which ever aims at conveying some deeper and more subtle thing beyond its immediate object. Now, as this depth and this subtlety possess, of necessity, a note of intimacy and delicacy, and the value of fleeting and rare, or at least personal shades, it is Impressionism, the complement and habitual counterpart of Symbolism, that already is adumbrated in the experiments and intentions of Swinburne. Here once more Rossetti, on English soil, had been his predecessor.

If he had exploited those new resources to the full, he would have been one of those writers of genius around whom a whole generation can be organized. A very considerable poet, Swinburne yet is not the centre of his literary age. He lacked, to be such, the determination and sureness of instinct. Half transformed as it is by the æsthetics of Symbolism, his art still remains involved in Romanticism pure and simple. What matters even more, among the possible instruments of Symbolism, his temperament evinces a radical preference, in which a weakness is betrayed; he chooses the most accessible, though not always the most superficial one: the luxuriant fluency and the musicalness of vocabulary. It is almost exclusively from the dazzling abundance and sonorous quality of words that he expects the suggestion which will gather round poetic expression, prolonging and amplifying it. This tendency may have been encouraged by Victor Hugo's verbal virtuosity; still, it is spontaneous with Swinburne, and carries him farther than it did his master. So completely does he surrender to the intoxication of language, that his inspiration, very often, seems to follow no other guidance. The development of each poem, constructed on a simple impression or idea, obeys neither a principle of mental logic, nor an artistic judgment; it is shapeless, indefinite, monotonous, and stops only from exhaustion. Ceaselessly taken up again, the theme is illustrated by a profusion of images, itself governed by a profusion of words. It is the word which stands at the very centre of the thought, like the motive in a symphony; through its meaning, and chiefly through its colour and sound, it possesses a peculiar magnetism, which attracts certain other vocables, and, by means of these, other feelings and other ideas. This attraction acts through the normal channel of rhyme; but rhyme is very far from meeting all his needs; alliteration, whose sway extends over several words in the same line, is at the very heart of Swinburne's poetical rhetoric; it is not unfrequently the controlling force of his inspiration. A sound, a chord, connected by an elementary affinity with an aspect of nature and with a mood, are thus, as in music, the real origin of many poems, whose frames they build up through their recurrence.

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[1] See above, Book VI. chap. iv. sect. 4.

Such a method is acceptable in itself, chiefly when associated with a special order of poetry, and it has been given its consecration by frequent use in contemporary literature. But Swinburne, although in one sense he carries it very far, does not practise it in its true spirit, or with much originality. A musician, he remains at the same time an orator. Whilst his words are the notes in a melody, they are still intellectual signs; and though this will necessarily happen with all poets, the difficult fusion of the musical with the logical expressions, a feat in which the most consummate artists show their mastery, is hardly achieved here but by impoverishing them both. Swinburne's thought is vehement, but simple; it rarely leaves the field of commonplaces. Beyond the explicit themes, sincere in their ardour, but insufficiently renewed and personal, the indirect suggestions which his symbolism offers us are of a rather limited range, either in variety or in delicacy. The most interesting—those for instance which he associates with some strangely desolate landscapes of the southern or eastern English coast—are repeated to satiety. His music, on the other hand, is wonderfully easy and brilliant, but not of the most winning or the most ethereal kind. His ear, although very susceptible and safe in many respects, has not the richest or the most exquisite range as compared with those of other English poets. His metrical displays are extraordinarily spirited and successful; he has handled with efficiency a vast number of measures and stanzas; an incomparable writer of verse at the beginning of his career, he remains such to the end. There it is perhaps that Swinburne has most certainly been an innovator; he has added to the prosodic scope of English poetry. His ease, unfortunately, results too often in profuseness; and he knows too rarely how to secure for an effect the supreme virtue of moderation.

His whole art is thus swayed by the predominance of one mental power, and that not the highest. His temperament, however abundantly gifted, had not received all gifts. When closely examined, the limitations of his genius are found to be intimately connected with an inner contrast which runs through his very being. In the boldest aims and intuitions of his poetry, he is a man of his own time, nervous, high-strung, excitable, already attuned to the coming age. By the whole of his character, on the other hand, he is related to the most ancient tradition of his race. His instincts at bottom are akin to those of the psychological line of descent which, deriving from the Anglo-Saxon type, continues through the centuries, and reappears, in more or less modified forms, down to recent times. Some affinities are thus revealed between him and Kipling. He loves the sea, the wind, elementary forces, with a less spiritual, more physical and primitive passion than that of Shelley. He feels the spell of the drear, harsh landscapes in which the imagination of the Saxon seamen revolved. The enervating curiosities, the intellectualized sensations to which he seems to tend at one time, do not answer the deepest truth of his nature; he is too simple and traditional to be satisfied with decadence. We thus see him without wonder gradually shake off the affected perversity which had at first shocked his readers, and move towards a kind of poetry, and feelings, that savour of orthodoxy; reconcile his republican faith with a patriotic admiration for Queen Victoria; demand freedom for Italy, while he refuses it to Ireland; and prelude in verse to Kipling's imperialism.

In the luxuriance of his metrical effusions there are moments of mastery, and points of perfection; at such times a fuller emotion, a more poignant sense of the beauty of things, check their own expression before it has run to excess; or, as the case may be, a firmer and more lucid artistic intent controls a more balanced development in a calmer mind. Swinburne has written short masterpieces; these are not of the highest order, but no other than himself could have written them.

They are to be found as early as the first series of *Poems and Ballads*, but chiefly in the second and the third; in the *Songs before Sunrise;* in the two dramas composed in imitation of Greek tragedy (*Atalanta, Erechtheus*), where such a genuine perception of Hellenism, such a true enthusiasm for classical beauty, are but rather imperfectly welded into a whole with an entirely modern inspiration. The mixture strikes one as artificial, and very different from its model, although the difference leaves it its price. There are in the choruses of those dramas admirable pieces, and universally known. It is still in its lyricism that the worth of Swinburne's poetry here resides; and lyricism remains everywhere the very soul of his work, extensive as the range of the subjects and kinds may be. His genius is not philosophical; least of all is it dramatic. His narrative, descriptive, elegiac poems acquire animation and rise to a higher level as soon as in their progress they can catch on to one of the favourite themes—the sea, the joy of effort, the glory of life and the universality of death, the procession of the seasons, the power and the fragility of love, upon which his unwearied fancy weaves symphonic variations. To the end, the abundance and the quality of that production are astonishing. The series inspired by the Arthurian legends (*Tristram of Lyonesse*) bears being compared with Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*. The trilogy which revolves round Queen Mary Stuart is interesting, not through the studies of characters, or the action, but through the energy of form, and the heat of historical imagination.

Like the romantic generation of 1820, Swinburne had fed his youthful eagerness on the highly stimulating example of the Elizabethans. No one except Lamb has done more to instil new life into the forgotten reputations of Shakespeare's time. His critical work is copious, mixed, strong in spite of the monotony born of judgments ever intense, and of a sensibility impetuous to excess. He had clear and profound perceptions, in a field where to perceive at all was neither commonplace, nor without merit. His enthusiasms, though not his disparagements, contributed to settle literary values. He not only followed paths which had been already opened, and studied Ben Jonson and Chapman along with Shakespeare; he was one of the first to proclaim the genius of Blake; and recent writers, such as Landor, Charlotte Brontë, Dickens, met in him with that courageous and sincere judge who does not fear to pay homage to contemporary writers, as if they had undergone the test of time.

2. The Novel of Adventure: Stevenson, etc.—The revival of the novel of adventure springs at the same time from a reaction against the positive spirit of the century, and from the very impetus which carries the century towards an ever broader widening of the field of knowledge and experience. The age of steam and electricity sees the boundaries of the universe recede even farther, and the last riddles of the earth begin to open; the desire to know assumes something of the appetite for the marvellous. From the science of nature, which daily grows more prodigal of wonders, the transition remains easy to the poetry of the supernatural. A new literature takes its rise in scientific imagination. On the other hand, in so far as the discipline of austere reason repressed the need of dreams, and the persistent craving for a free exercise of fancy, the desire of the beyond in life and in art must overthrow a barrier in order to satisfy itself, or at least it believes that the barrier must be overthrown. So the direct or indirect expressions which for a generation it had been receiving from the idealistic renascence of religious faith, or of social charity, or of the love of the beautiful, no longer prove sufficient. It is now the whole intellectual temper of the period which is inwardly modified; the order and hierarchy of literary motives is upset; and some themes are now asserting themselves, after an unjustified eclipse, through a victory which is a sign of the times.

Realism in itself bears a character of severity and narrowness. It restricts our attention to a still vast, but circumscribed field; and what it excludes is precisely what remains most attractive to many minds. It focuses the artist's attention on subjects either average and drab, or intense but painful; it implies the ruling passion of unmixed truth. Even when permeated by charity, it still clings to the soil of everyday mediocrity. Hardly has the documentary method of Trollope and Reade borne its characteristic fruits, when the tastes and preferences which cannot be reconciled with it make their hostility clear, and prepare for a counter-offensive. Stevenson is fully aware that his work is prompted by a desire to avoid the naturalism of Zola.

Realism, however, could enter into a friendly alliance with the search for the sensational. In the novels of Wilkie Collins and Reade, it was combined with a propensity to rouse mysterious or frightful emotions; it would pass at will beyond the limits of the normal, and did not even stop at the bounds of the real.[1] In this way again, the new Romanticism continues the preceding age. But literary periods draw their main strength from the assurance or the illusion of the salutary change which they accomplish; and the period which, about the end of the century, succeeds a phase of predominant rationality, is conscious before everything of its opposition to it.

The need of adventure was already obeyed by such instincts as did not receive full satisfaction from the central will to balance and order that underlay the Victorian age. That need never dies, and least of all can the English genius cease to feel it. At no time had great explorers been more numerous. The personality of Burton[2] makes the link visible that connects the conquest of the far unknown with mysticism and imaginative literature. The success of the book in which Kinglake[3] describes the East with elegance and yet with genuine sincerity is due to the fascination of the subject, no less than to the talent of the author.

No figure is more original than that of Borrow.[4] His career developed through the very heart of the Victorian period, but morally he does not belong to it; his inner nature rather makes him a forerunner of the following generation. He has to the highest degree the gift of possessing his spiritual independence without any outward rebellion. Whilst the social hierarchy is growing more imperious than ever, and respectability is stiffening into a dogma, Borrow achieves his freedom through the elusiveness of his roaming existence. His is the individual instinct, the initiative through which so many Englishmen redeem the psychological passiveness of their nation as a whole. His tastes

[1] See above, Book VI. chap. v. sect. 3.

[2] Sir Richard Burton (1821–90): *A Pilgrimage to El-Medinah and Meccah*, 1855–56, etc.; translation of *The Arabian Nights*, 1885–88.

[3] A. W. Kinglake (1809–91): *Eothen*, 1844; *The Invasion of the Crimea*, 1863–87.

[4] George Borrow (1803–81): *The Zincali*, 1841; *The Bible in Spain*, 1843; *Lavengro*, 1851; *The Romany Rye*, 1857; *Wild Wales*, 1862. See the biographies by H. Jenkins, 1912; C. K. Shorter (*Life of George Borrow*), 1920; study by E. Thomas (*George Borrow, the Man and His Works*), 1912; new ed., 1920.

lead him among the wanderers of the road—gipsies and tramps; he shares their life, learns their language, and finds occasion on the wayside for engrossing adventures in the most simple meetings and incidents. In Spain, where he is sent by an English association as missionary and distributor of Bibles, it is to the lower people that he turns; and his deep intuition of all that is human reveals to him the familiar intimate truth of a foreign soul. He travels in Wales, and no exotic land seems richer in enchanting experiences. His art is very conscious, and so does not always succeed in hiding itself; even when he is faithfully adhering to facts, his relation is too clever not to rouse the suspicion of literary insincerity. Whatever the case may be, such a genuine sense of the unexpected, of the fresh novelty contained in the nearest horizons as well as under distant skies, is a fecund source of creation. It wells up in a mind which carries with it everywhere an inexhaustible realization of the interest and the variety of things. Strangeness here, as with Wordsworth and Coleridge, is not a property of beings in themselves, but a quality of the imagination in which they are reflected.

From about 1870, more numerous are the paths attempted by that restless desire of renovation. The historical novel, whose tradition had been kept alive by Thackeray, Dickens, Lord Lytton, George Eliot, Charles Reade, shows fresh vitality. Blackmore's[1] tales answer to the need of mental estrangement in time, and in space as well, for the surroundings in which their plots are set, the higher moors of Devonshire, appeal to imagination through their picturesque wildness. Just as *Lorna Doone* testifies to the attraction of the past, it points to the growing interest felt by the public in the picture of provincial manners, the study of which is thenceforth the matter of a whole series of books. Blackmore has invention, a poetical gift, a rather clever sense of effect; but neither his pathos nor his humour is free from conventional artifice. In the work of Shorthouse[2] history lends an elaborate background, of patient solidity, to the serious working of a pious and sincere idealism. *John Inglesant,* which was extolled in its day, meets to-day with unjust scorn. This picture of religious life in England during the middle part of the seventeenth century is drawn in accordance with the instincts of properly Victorian æsthetics; the art of Shorthouse is not without some analogy to that of Tennyson's *Idylls of the King,* and his mystic hero has the somewhat morbid spirituality of one of Burne-Jones's knights. However, the soft light which falls on that novel as from a painted glass window blends gem-like hues into a harmonious tone, and the atmosphere of strangeness in which it is bathed is subtle enough to remind one of Hawthorne's manner.

Another symptom of the uneasiness which is then rising from the depths of Victorian consciousness is the attraction which it feels thenceforth towards the varieties of culture most opposed to that industrial civilization, the very type of which Great Britain seems then to be. An age of positive reason, stirred by so many secret fevers, becomes enamoured of the refined or fatalistic simplicity in which the Far East has for thousands of years found repose. On the very eve of Japan's transformation, Lafcadio Hearn[3] passionately discovers the heroic soul, the exquisite chivalry hidden within the tradition of her smiling courtesy. He himself has brought from the West the last gospel of scientific intellectualism, the philosophy of Spencer; he believes his allegiance keeps faithful to the sovereign principle of evolution, whilst his moral being is allured, captivated by the charm of a land and a race whose physical and mental horizons are essentially unchanged. An artist and psychologist, a delicate stylist, he eagerly drinks in the philtre which satiates the unconscious thirst of his profounder nature. His books are a revelation; and the Anglo-Saxon world, secure in the proud possession of the rules of life which have so far sustained its strength, learns in them how to respect an ethics, a religion, an art, based on an entirely independent foundation.

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[1] Richard Blackmore (1825–1900): *Lorna Doone,* 1869; *The Maid of Sker,* 1872, etc. See F. J. Snell, *The Blackmore Country,* 1906.

[2] Joseph Henry Shorthouse (1834–1903): *John Inglesant,* 1881; *Sir Percival,* 1886. See *Life and Letters,* 1905.

[3] Lafcadio Hearn (1850–1904), born in the Ionian Islands, of Irish and Greek parents, stayed in the United States and the West Indies, became Professor of English Literature in the University of Tokio, married in Japan and definitively settled there. *Two Years in the French West Indies,* 1890; *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan,* 1894; *Kokoro,* 1896; *Gleanings in Buddha-Fields,* 1897; *Japan: an Attempt at Interpretation,* 1904, etc. See the biography by E. Bisland (*Life and Letters of Lafcadio Hearn*), 1906; studies by G. M. Gould, 1908; J. de Smet, 1911.

Through elementary methods, and without estranging himself from English skies, Richard Jefferies[1] practises the same escape of the soul. In him the mysticism of nature revives, with an intensity which half a century of increasing consciousness has but stimulated the more; and he surrenders to it more thoroughly than Wordsworth had done. Less influenced by university learning, though no less by science itself and books, and closer even to the daily experience of what he describes, he more widely introduces into literature that wealth derived from the direct observation of fields and animals, which had won recognition there from the time of Gilbert White. The descriptions of Jefferies are of a minuteness which may well seem excessive, whenever one refuses to share in the faith which animates them: the ardour of an impassioned naturalism. His art, of superior worth in its accuracy, its sense of animal or vegetable life, its poetical freshness of perception, lacks balance, does not know how to select and construct. The reflection and the taste are not here worthy of the vision. On the other hand, his original intuition is in absolute control of his sensibility, because his culture, being entirely self-made, does not oppose to it any negative social complex; the pantheism of Jefferies is not merely the twilight of an ecstasy felt in childhood; it is a complete, lived religion, free from the alloy of an alien spiritualism; and his confession (*The Story of My Heart*), with its ineffectual, moving, stammering utterance, is a psychological document of rare value.

Stevenson[2] is a born writer. He imparts a high artistic quality to the novel of adventure, in its most declared form.

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[1] Richard Jefferies (1848–87): *The Gamekeeper at Home*, 1878; *Wild Life in a Southern County*, 1879; *The Amateur Poacher*, 1879; *Wood Magic*, 1881; *Bevis*, 1882; *The Story of My Heart*, 1883; *The Life of the Fields*, 1884; *After London*, 1885, etc. See the biography of P. E. Thomas, 1909; studies by C. J. Masseck (*Richard Jefferies, Étude d'une Personnalité*), 1913; A. E. Thorn, 1914; F. Wallis (*The Ideals of Richard Jefferies*), 1914.

[2] Robert Louis Stevenson, born in 1850 in Edinburgh, was the son of an engineer, studied at the University, and sought a literary career; after writing various essays, he sojourned in France and published original impressions: *An Inland Voyage*, 1878; *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes*, 1879. While in California he married an American lady, Mrs. Osbourne (1879); collected his moral essays and literary criticisms: *Virginibus Puerisque*, 1881; *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*, 1882; and short stories: *New Arabian Nights*, 1882; while *The Silverado Squatters*, 1883, describes Western America. The great success of his adventure novel, *Treasure Island*, 1883, decided his calling. He published *Prince Otto*, 1885; *The Dynamiter*, 1885; *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, 1886; *Kidnapped*, 1886; *The Black Arrow*, 1888; *The Master of Ballantrae*, 1889; *The Wrong Box*, 1889; *The Wrecker*, 1892; *Catriona*, 1893; *The Ebb Tide*, 1894. Extremely delicate in health, he set out on a long sea voyage in the Pacific, after which he settled in the island of Samoa (1891), drawing from these experiences the material for *The Island Nights Entertainments*, 1893; *The Vailima Letters*, 1895. He died in 1894, leaving two unfinished novels, *Weir of Hermiston*, 1896; *St. Ives*, 1898; a collection of early writings, *Lay Morals, etc.*, appeared in 1911. He had published poetry: *A Child's Garden of Verses*, 1885; *Underwoods*, 1887, etc.; and written for the theatre. *Works*, Tusitala ed., 1923, etc. See the biography by Graham Balfour (1901, new ed., 1915); the *Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. by Sidney Colvin, 1899; the studies by Baildon, 1901; Japp, 1905; Swinnerton (*Robert Louis Stevenson, a Critical Study*), 1914; Sir W. Raleigh, 1915; Sir L. Stephen (*Studies of a Biographer*, vol. iv.), 1902.

In so doing, he deliberately returns to the primitive, fresh powers of literary creation. A refined nature, gifted with a keen perception of beauty, susceptible to the delicate shades of ideas or words, he is retained by a temperament which at bottom is almost puritanic within the range of the inner sensualities of the soul. He observes, enjoys and assimilates concrete reality—manners, physical features and moral characteristics, outlines and colours of landscapes; the circumambient realism is felt in the wealth and the precision of his picturesque notations. However, a preoccupation with conduct, and the self-absorption of a meditative thought, remain the outstanding traits of his nature. This ethical attention to life fosters and accentuates the repugnance of his instinct against the ambitions and methods of science. He wants, once more, to infuse into the things of the mind the limpid and fecund sap which rises from elementary experience, and from the psychology of the child. Without any explicit profession, Stevenson gives his adhesion to anti-intellectualism, the need of which he experiences, like many others about him. His novels, his poems, his critical studies or essays, have their unity there. The first minister to wonder and the passion for dramatic adventure; the second subtly enter into the unsophisticated emotions of the young; the third analyse authors, their writings, or the wisdom which we learn from reflection, with a simplicity which goes straight to direct data, to those which the intelligence will readily neglect or despise. In this sense, he always wrote *virginibus puerisque;* and his artistic aim was to reconcile the scrupulous refinement of maturity with the youthful purity of the theme.

With that charming and almost feminine nature, Stevenson is on his guard against softness or mawkishness; he has a sense of courage and virility; he won over disease and death, by means of an unceasing struggle, sixteen years of the most conscientious literary labour. In an age when writers do not dislike standing in the limelight, one cannot say that Stevenson displays his own self with coquetry; he allows his personality to appear only with modesty; far from exploiting the pathos of his life, he was at pains to hide it. The sweetness and the heroism of his nature are equally sincere. In him the strong fibre of the Scottish temperament keeps recognizable, under the grace of a sensibility and a culture with which were mingled the fine artistic perception of France, and later on the voluptuous influences of the Pacific. France stands for a large share in the formation of his talent. The clear, exact, nervous and smooth style, which from an early stage he selected for himself, bears the stamp of our best masters. He breathed the air of France at a moment when the triumph of Naturalism was past its prime, and the symbolist revival was already dawning. The vigorous but exterior effects of the former school repelled him; with the promise of the latter, on the contrary, he may have felt his own affinity. The French character, in any case, revealed to him such of its inner secrets as could be made out from the talk of our Cevennes peasants, rather than from more conventional encounters.

The anecdotes and the sketches of *An Inland Voyage, Travels with a Donkey,* are narrated or drawn with an already unerring tact, a delightful sobriety, to which Scottish humour and French measure have contributed. *Treasure Island* was a delight to several generations of young readers on more than one continent, and grown-ups will dip into it again; the craft of the storyteller, the intensity of the episodes, the vividness of the exotic scenes and of the main characters, are merits in themselves; but they grow out of a more profound intuition—that of the imaginative appeal, of the dramatic progress, and the moral originality of the themes; and this is an intuition of a psychological order. The sinister cripple, Silver, is worthy of a great artist, and Stevenson owed the first outline of this figure to his rambles, in early youth, through the underworld of beggary and vice. The Scottish novels are very different from those of Sir Walter Scott; much more modern as they are and technically conscious, much more sparing in their method, they do not show the prodigious abundance, the careless creation of unforgettable characters, which remain the birthright of the master; still, in many respects, they bear being compared with them. Stevenson, like Scott, was steeped in the intimate knowledge of the manners and the people of Scotland; his landscapes, more intense, reap the benefit of the gradual inurement through which, in the course of the century, the wild and grand aspects of nature had been divested of the last remnants of their repulsive horror, and had become the familiar companions of the human mind. The structure of those novels, or their liveliness, is not everywhere equal, and does not hide the weaker moments of an undermined vitality. The last, *Weir of Hermiston,* which was left unfinished, is by far the most concentrated, and promised to be a masterpiece.

In *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* we find Stevenson attracted, as one could have expected, by the problems of the subconscious. At bottom, it is an allegory in the manner of Bunyan; but modern psychology here broadens and renews the old ethics of Puritanism; and contemporary Symbolism imparts to allegory a freedom of movement that is infinitely precious. The case of a dual personality is not studied with superior subtlety; but it is brought home to our imaginations with striking efficiency. This book would reach an exceptional order of artistic value, were it not that its method is not kept with sufficient energy within the field of the implicit.

All that Stevenson wrote about the South Sea Islands, the refuge of his last years, is the work of a man gifted with a keen sensibility to landscape, and with a penetrating sense of primitive, child-like souls; broad-minded enough to accept the paganism of nature, and reconcile it with a spirituality freed from all dogmas. The essay-writer has a winning and yet shrewd manner, in which a smiling irony mingles with the clear-sightedness of disillusioned eyes. In their essential subjectivity, these essays bear some distant resemblance to those of Charles Lamb; less artistically wrought, less richly loaded with intentions, they make, as Elia had done, the writer's personality the very centre of his work. As a poet, Stevenson shows a simple felicity of phrase, a sensitiveness of soul, which constitute in themselves a sufficient inspiration, within an intimate and modest order of themes.

Stevenson devoted very attentive care to the art of writing. He knew the anxious quest of the exact word, the search for a cadence at the same time harmonious and not too markedly regular. His style is sufficiently nervous to bear such conscious filing and refining. It draws its strength from a very varied and supple vocabulary, in which the whole scale of learned shades meets with the most racy vein—popular, technical or dialectal words. At times the exquisiteness of the form seems to exceed the just demands of the matter, and this is the single weakness of that prose. Therefore, the very dense sparingness of its best moments—in *Weir of Hermiston,* for example—raises it to its perfection. It then keeps as it were a classical quality in its eager but balanced Romanticism.

3. Æsthetes and Decadents.—The worship of beauty, with Ruskin, had been a religion. It had fitted in easily with the demands of the moral and social ideals with which the Victorian age never ceased to be deeply instinct. It had tended to health and balance. Already in the Pre-Raphaelites, in spite of the pious and mediæval tone which their imaginations assumed, a very different attitude was adumbrated; they made room for sensuousness by the side of enthusiasm. Swinburne, who felt their influence, glorified the beautiful with a reckless and blasphemous ardour, which seemed to adore it out of enmity to the useful gods. Through him, and through other channels as well, the French doctrine of art for art's sake was creeping into England; Naturalism indeed, at one point, coincided with that principle, and like it placed the artist's activity outside of and above morals.

It is to such symptoms, and not to the gospel of Ruskin, that one must trace back the independent development of English literary Æstheticism.

The master of this movement is Walter Pater.[1] In his scholarly retirement, the prophet of an esoteric faith, he teaches it with an intellectual and detached zeal. It radiates out through more or less direct applications, studies of civilizations and souls; on one occasion only it reveals itself unreservedly, and then, as if frightened at its own audacity, hides itself again. In this text where it is concentrated (the Conclusion to the *Renaissance*) its opposition to Ruskin's message is vividly brought out. The adept's duty is no longer to pursue through the efflorescence of natural forms the Divine influx, the source of strength and of harmony with the will of the universe; beauty no longer is the blissful perfection of creatures true to the law of their essence; it no longer rests like a glory, in the societies of men, upon the summits of simple austerity and of heroism. Every social or moral consideration vanishes; one thing remains: the voluptuous asceticism of the sage who is to die. Life offers, to the knowing, occasions of psychical intensity; to gather as many of them as possible, and to taste them all at their highest pitch, so that the flame of consciousness should burn with its full ardour, such is the secret principle of an existence that actually possesses and rules itself. Far from giving itself away, it shall suck in the whole world, and absorb it for its own good; this devouring strain will wear it out in its turn; but death is the inevitable night, whose coming is delayed, but not prevented, by the mean thrift of thankless virtues; and nothing matters but the violence of the fire in which an ephemeral energy is irradiated by its very destruction.

This consistent hedonism does not stop short of its ultimate stage; it shakes off all the chains with which society and the hygiene of souls have loaded the skilful search for pleasure; unmindful of the collectivity, it makes for the death of the individual along a path blossoming with roses and strewn with ashes. It is indistinguishable from the restrained and penetrating pessimism which FitzGerald had enclosed in three hundred immortal lines.[2] More ascetic outwardly, it lingers less on the smiling aspects of epicureanism; it is urged by a more anxious impatience for life; it widens, too, the field of voluptuousness, introduces abundantly into it the emotions of knowledge. But it teaches no other wisdom; its aroma no less surely benumbs all the illusions or the beliefs which connect the life of one being with something beyond itself.

Pater did not always write, or think either, it seems, at that pitch. On other occasions, his doctrine dwells on the contemplation, the analysis of beautiful forms; or even he brings into it an element which alters and amends it. *Marius the Epicurean*, the novel in which most of his philosophy, though not of his art, is to be found, seems to spiritualize the search for pleasure as far as sacrifice pure and simple.

Such an extension of the principle no doubt implies that hedonism is diversified with new shades; that into it is admitted a superior quality, which ordinary perception is no longer by itself competent to appreciate. A strange and secretive mind, Pater never explained away a touch of mystery in his life; and his adhesion to the essence of a very free form of Christianity seems to have been more than merely a matter of observance.

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[1] Walter Pater (1839–94), fellow of Brasenose College, led at Oxford the life of a lay recluse, and through the magnetism of his work influenced a group of disciples, before exercising a much wider action in England. He published historical and critical studies: *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, 1873 (the Conclusion, omitted in the second and third editions, reappeared in the fourth, 1888); *Imaginary Portraits*, 1887; *Appreciations*, 1889; *Plato and Platonism*, 1893; *Greek Studies*, 1895; *Miscellaneous Studies*, 1895; and novels: *Marius the Epicurean*, 1885; *Gaston de Latour* (unfinished), 1896. *Works*, Library ed., 1910. See the biography by T. Wright, 1907; studies by A. Symons (*Studies in Prose and Verse*), 1904; A. C. Benson (English Men of Letters), 1906; E. Thomas (*Walter Pater, a Critical Study*), 1913; E. Bendz (*The Influence of Pater . . . in the Prose Writings of Oscar Wilde*), 1914.

[2] See above, Book V. chap. iv. sect. 6.

Thus diverted from the direct and uncompromising assertion of self, his æstheticism was spent in tasting and intensifying the joys to be reaped from the knowledge of the past and the understanding of human souls; and in order to heighten these joys, his method was to quicken in himself and others the full consciousness of all their aspects. Pater was curiously interested in the phases of history; and chiefly in those, like the Renaissance and the beginnings of Christianity, in which men's minds are driven by a powerful eagerness, or stirred by profound conflicts, which rouse impassioned tumults in them. The main object of his interest is still man, even when he follows him through the picturesque surroundings where his life develops; and the measure of the artistic value of individuals is still the complexity of their character. This implies that the historian or the moralist, with him, tends to be merged in the psychologist; and the psychologist works for the benefit of the critic.

Pater as a critic is eminent. His method is that impressionism which Hazlitt and Lamb had brilliantly illustrated. His intuition, no less acute, is still more personal than theirs, in so far as it is more limited, exclusively governed by the feeling of his own powers; in so far, too, as it readily utilizes semi-conscious states, the dim regions of the inner world, and as his judgments more often are a divination of the obscure parts and of the reverse side of souls. Penetration, at that degree, has a touch of the morbid; many will deem it disquieting, it is made up of too composite a sympathy. Whatever the case may be, the "appreciations" of Pater are re-creations, the substance of which is, we feel, drawn from himself. This subjective attitude is accentuated in the *Imaginary Portraits,* which borrow nothing from reality but germs, suggestions or types, and which through their central method are more than half-way approximations to the novel. Pater's critical studies do not aim at completeness, nor at a cautious and unexceptionable accuracy; they seize upon moral, and thus usually subtle and hidden, elements of the individualities of writers or artists, and connect with these elements the particular modes and special accents of their art. These studies are far from accounting for everything; they do not leave the reader's mind fully satisfied, and do not always carry conviction. But few are the cases in which they do not strike us as a sort of second sight, deciphering, through a transparent medium, the subconscious impulses at the root of expressions and forms. One might point to famous pages—such as the analysis of the Joconde's smile—which can hardly have been written but under the sway of an illumination that is almost a mystic state.

In Pater's theoretical studies of literature, it is to the same faculty that his power can be traced. The admirable *Essay on Style* describes the anxious search for the accurate word with exceptional felicity, after the example and practice of Flaubert, and dissolves all the rules which go to the making of a writer's conscientiousness into the single respect of an inward truth. Here again, the technique of writing, lighted up by the radiance from a divining intelligence, discloses its deepest secret, and it is a spiritual one.

An intuitive critic, Pater has in him the soul of poetry. He is aware of it; and just as he brushes aside the superficial barrier which a mere prejudice would erect between prose and poetical effects, he clothes his judgments in the richly significant garb of the most harmonious and many-hued language. As a writer he is of the first rank, but fails to be one of the greatest, because his creative strength was impoverished through an excess of refinement, and he lacked the constructive sense of a work as a whole. His crowning merit lies in details; in the perfection of single pages, occasionally of chapters or essays, the polished quality of which covers, without hiding it, a robust concatenation of ideas. This style is enriched by the powers of Romanticism; it is flexibly modelled on the delicacies of a keen sensitive perception, and shines with all the colours of a vivid imagination; it reaches at times, in the rendering of "impressions," a degree of acuteness, and of evocative witchcraft, which distinctly betokens a more modern, more conscious art, capable of more intense effects, than that of his predecessors, whether one thinks of Landor, De Quincey, or Ruskin. Pater's mastery resides in the sureness of the method with which this broader scale of artistic devices is handled. His prose is a skilful music, nervous like that of recent composers, blending the more distant elements of nature and the soul into a harmony founded upon dissonance; subtle, and yet as clear as classical chords.

Oscar Wilde[1] is the leader of the æsthetic school in the eyes of the average reader. A disciple of Pater, he pushes his master's academic and sober doctrine to an excessive and cynical display. As a young man, he made a name for himself through the intense and refined audacity of his clothes, his tastes, his language; his gifts of satirical wit and epigram thus lent his talent a drawing-room and rather superficial character. However, the sharpness of his delineations, and his biting verve, already revealed a born writer of superior merit.

He tried his hand at several kinds of writing, without yet achieving that deeper agreement of sincerity with brilliance which shows the main strength and stable quality of a mind. His poems are elegant, charming, but do not disclose any original personality; in their sauciness, or their pathos, they strike us as unequally successful experiments in verse. His first articles or essays bear too obvious marks of his inordinate desire for paradox.

With *Intentions,* however, the serious bearing of what might have seemed a mere affectation grows manifest. In all directions, the criticism and the analysis here are singularly far-reaching. Wilde's dilettantism is transformed into a theory of the self-sufficient and autonomous value of art; his mockery, into a scrutiny of the blind side of conscious beings; his irreverence, into a sketch of an "immoralist" doctrine in the manner of Nietzsche. The title of the collection is no unsafe clue to the hesitation and incompleteness which are still felt in those diverse attempts; the destructive thrusts of the thought do not converge against one object, so as to multiply their deadliness by repetition; the implied suggestions do not develop into theses. Nothing, on the other hand, can be more intelligent.

Wilde's plays are remarkably successful, and stand out through their exceptional merit on the almost unrelieved mediocrity of theatrical production for a whole century. His comedies have a rapid and brilliant animation; their dialogue shows the easy flow of the traditional French manner; the plots are cleverly wrought; the comic characters, mere sketches most of them, lay no claim to depth. The displays of wit and verbal fencing, which go beyond life, and at times overreach themselves in a sort of enthusiasm, would remind one of

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[1] Oscar Fingall O'Flahertie Wilde, born in Ireland in 1856, studied at Oxford, where he imbibed the influence of Ruskin and Pater, travelled in Italy and Greece, posed as a leader of the younger æsthetes, and published verses: *Poems,* 1881; critical studies: *The Soul of Man under Socialism,* etc., many of which were collected in 1891 (*Intentions*); comedies or dramas: *The Duchess of Padua,* 1891; *Lady Windermere's Fan,* 1893; *Salome* (first written in French, and performed in Paris in 1894); *A Woman of No Importance,* 1894; *An Ideal Husband, The Importance of Being Earnest,* 1895; novels: *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime,* 1887; *The Happy Prince, etc.,* 1888; *The Picture of Dorian Gray,* 1891; *The House of Pomegranates,* 1891. Charged with a breach of morality (1895), he spent two years in penal servitude; 1898 saw the publication of *The Ballad of Reading Gaol,* and in 1900 he died in France. *De Profundis,* written in imprisonment, 1896, appeared in 1905. *Dorian Gray* is no longer published in England. *Poems,* two vols., 1906; *Works,* twelve vols. (incomplete). See the bibliography by St. Mason, 1914; studies by A. Symons (*Studies in Prose and Verse*), 1904; A. Gide, 1905; R. T. Hopkins, 1913; A. Ransome (*Oscar Wilde, a Critical Study*), 1913; Fr. Harris, 1920.

Congreve, were it not that an undercurrent of bitter self-consciousness is felt behind the mirth of their fanciful irony. This contrasted character imparts to these light works their chief interest, and their weakness as well. To all appearances, their aim is only to amuse, and so laughter or a smile should do full justice to their meaning; but the laugh which they raise does not ring true; it leaves a corroding taste in the mouth; it opens the way for a bold criticism of the moral and social order, which is just adumbrated, and never finds an opportunity to develop—an opportunity which the author, indeed, seems unwilling to create. In the same way, some personages are meant to be edifying: for instance, in *Lady Windermere's Fan,* the goodness of the beings who live according to the truth of instinct is set in a favourable light, as opposed to the withering artificiality of conventional virtues. The antithesis, as it is presented, is hardly able to carry conviction. Those comedies, in spite of their brilliance, belong to a mongrel and somewhat unnatural kind. Wilde had it in him to write problem plays, with a frankly destructive aim; confronted with the resistance and the fears of the public, he toned down his themes, thinned out the substance of his works, wound up his plots so as to please the shallow taste of the audience. *Salome,* in which the cruelty of sensual passion is studied in a realistic manner, has more unity, though its art might be more delicately shaded.

The book in which Wilde has expressed himself unreservedly is his novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray.* His æstheticism is to be found there with all its aspects: the search for intense or rare sensations, the ban put on every belief, every feeling, which sets a limit to the faculty of enjoyment, or enthrals the soul; the superiority of the true artist—of him whose whole life is a work of art —over the rules of society or morality. There again is to be found the nearest approach to a convincing psychological study of which Wilde was capable: the complete analysis of his own dilettantism in the two characters of Lord Henry and Dorian Gray. There as well he has, with the passive clear-sightedness which belongs to some mental states, given to his own thesis its antidote, by depicting the inner ruin brought about by the stubborn quest of pleasure. The novel is built upon a striking symbol: the divided personality implied in a detached existence, which watches itself as one might a play, and from which the strokes of life glance off powerlessly, is represented by a mysterious inversion of the natural order, through which the actual face keeps its inviolate youth, while the portrait is stained by the defiling course of impure years; until the day when the point of a dagger, shearing through the fiction on which this division rests, gives back to art its impassible serenity, and to the living being his mortal transience. Filled as it is with the influences of French decadentism, the book is strongly conceived, and written in a very studied style; it is, moreover, whether willingly or unwillingly, as sincere as it was in Wilde to be.

In spite of its clear-sightedness, however, and of the implied self-criticism which it abundantly reveals, it leaves a turbid and unhealthy impression upon the mind. A fate in it casts its shadow before, and nothing seems able to check its threatening course. A few years later the crisis broke out in which society crushed the man who had long set it at defiance. Wilde found in the realities of his misery the inspiration of the most powerful lines and of the only moving words which he ever wrote (*Ballad of Reading Gaol*). *De Profundis,* the effusion in which his ulcerated heart pours forth bitterness, pride and self-pity, rather than remorse and humility, is a strange work, which strikes the reader without touching him; the intuition of what purification by pain can be is present and alive in these pages; but it only throws light on the secret joy of the artist, who in renunciation discovers a new means of intense self-expression.

Wilde's work lives as one of the most penetrating analyses of the compromises in which the Victorian age had indulged; but by incurring moral discredit, he has destroyed the authority of his criticism. His thought, while it is quite as acute as that of Samuel Butler, and is clothed in much more attractive language, lacks the latter's solidity and balance.[1]

The English "decadents" are not a clearly outlined group. The "fin de siècle" spirit is diffused in the very atmosphere of this period. Pessimism, intellectual anarchy, all the painfulness which may cling to naturalism, all the boldness or perversity of symbolism and æstheticism, converge to support the confessed and indeed complacent feeling of a decadence. After so many positive achievements, man as a creature of desire no longer deems it possible to add a new zest to his efforts, but by giving up all thought of further progress; he accepts as a law the gradual dissolution of his energy. The France of Verlaine and Rimbaud then furnishes this frame of mind with models and formulæ. The greater number of the younger English novelists and poets of that age are steeped, to various degrees, in this very mood. The austere meditation of a Hardy, among the more mature writers, is not untouched by it (*Jude the Obscure*).

The only unity that can be found in the movement is of a psychological order. It is the outbreak of the instincts which had been repressed by the constraint of the Victorian period. The social and moral discipline of an age which had been stirred by many ferments, but had remained unanimous in its exterior observance, this time is shaken to its inner faith; the rebellious ideas and feelings escape from its hold in every direction. The individual asserts himself unrestrainedly. The need of frank or cynical truth, just like that of ethereal or morbid fancy; the paradoxes of aggressive personality, and at the same time the extolling of foreign examples; an uncompromising intellectuality, and on the other hand every caprice of imagination, the senses or the heart—all are equally the outcome of a central revolt, in which an orthodoxy of conduct, thought and taste, enforced by the dictatorial power of opinion, is now openly held in check.

The years that follow 1890 are those when the weakening of an out-of-date dogmatism, and the fatigue of an aging culture, are most widely reflected in the tone of souls. Then it is that some artists and writers, whom their affinities draw together, give a rally-point to those scattered tendencies. The strange inventions, the sophisticated audacity or the raw realism of the *Yellow Book*[2] bring the decadent school to a head. Almost all the advanced writers gather round this periodical. To its name the "nineties" owe the yellowish hue which they have kept as an attribute in a popular phrase.

Being thus vague and diffused, English decadentism has no literary programme. In it the most various literary intentions are found side by side. Æsthetes such as Wilde, naturalists like George Moore,[3] realists like Crackanthorpe,[4] neo-catholics like Lionel Johnson,[5] idealists and "Celtic" revivalists like Yeats,[6] are thus brought together. The most illuminating student[7] of this group, making an attempt to define its common spirit, points out its connection with continental, and especially with French origins; and it is in Symbolism—a more precise artistic endeavour, with a different aim—that he thinks he discovers its focus (*The Symbolist Movement in Literature*).

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[1] Among the theorists of æstheticism may be included John Addington Symonds (1840–93), art historian and critic. *The Renaissance in Italy*, 1875–86; *Shakespeare's Predecessors in the English Drama*, 1884; *Essays Speculative and Suggestive*, 1890, etc. See the study by V. W. Brooks, 1915.

[2] 1894–97. The drawings of Aubrey Beardsley (1872–98) remain typical of this collection.

[3] See further, sect. 4.

[4] 1865–96; a disciple of Zola and Maupassant.

[5] See further, sect. 4.

[6] Idem.

[7] Arthur Symons, born in 1865; poet, critic and novelist, was deeply influenced by contemporary French literature. He edited the *Savoy*, a review of art and letters, emphatically modern in its tastes (1896). Mention may be made of the following among his poetical collections, where the influence of Baudelaire and of the French symbolists is very apparent: *London Nights*, 1895; *Images of Good and Evil*, 1899; among his critical studies: *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*, 1899; *Studies in Prose and Verse*, 1904, etc.

Little consistent as it is, decadentism at least contains the germs of many further growths. It is a confused tentative medley of the tendencies which will renovate the literature of the twentieth century. Its course was, of necessity, to be brief. It meets in England with a prompter and more unanimous resistance than in France, as the English determination to preserve a healthy state of the public mind, on utilitarian grounds, is more inflexible. As early as 1895, a reaction sets in against it; this reaction triumphs from about 1900, thanks to the tightening of the nation's will at the time of the South African war. Among the writers whom the spell of the movement had attracted for a while, the larger number break away from it, and develop towards some more definite artistic purpose. But not a few, as if the weariness of living had eaten into their very vitality, die before they have been able to bring the promise of their personalities to full realization. The despair, the nihilism, the idle revolt of this short-lived generation, thus constitute, as it were, a replica, but an intensified one, of the Romanticism of 1820. The premature end of an Aubrey Beardsley, an Ernest Dowson,[1] a Crackanthorpe, and the suicide of a John Davidson,[2] too well agree with the bitterness and fever of their inspiration, not to confirm its sincerity, and not to throw light upon it.[3]

4. **The Celtic Revival.**—Inner affinities of more than one kind connect the new Romanticism with the Celtic revival. Ireland is the centre of the latter movement; and its leaders in Ireland have been, on the whole, writers instinct with a lyrical and mystic idealism. They share, moreover, through the origins of their art, in all the tendencies of which the composite spirit of the declining century is made up; Symbolism, Naturalism, Æstheticism, and even Decadent influences, contribute to their development. But the outstanding point is that the first seed from which the Celtic renascence grew was sown by European Romanticism from 1790 to 1848. This powerful stimulation of consciousness, and of the deeper collective instincts, brought about a general revival of the feelings of nationality or race. The nineteenth century is seething with the ferment of political decomposition and reorganization, which has been inoculated into the system of the old world by the active force of blood or soul kinship, between human groups which the chances of history had drawn apart. Thus stimulated, national feeling has since dominated over the psychology of peoples, and still does so at the present day. As soon, therefore, as the Neo-Romanticism of 1880, after a quieter period, again revives the grievances of repressed nationalities, it naturally fosters the act of spiritual will through which the "Celtic" groups of Great Britain put forth the claims of their distinct originality, by the side of English culture, or against it.

What is thus awaking and asserting itself, is rather a temperament, than the figure of a genuine ethnical unit. Scotland, Ireland, and even Wales, though to a lesser degree, are the complex products of the mingling of several races. The Celtic spirit is an abstraction; it stands for an ideal, the full portrait towards which those features tend which in the long run will shape themselves out, from what a human group is, and chiefly from what it wants to be. In the present instance, the human group is not only mixed, it is scattered. Nothing can be more certain than the fecundity of the Celtic infusion in the literature and life of Great Britain; nothing, on the other hand, can be more hazardous than the theories which profess to gauge and value the contribution of Celticism in the total product. Many of the qualities which are most readily attributed to it have doubtlessly existed, to a pronounced degree, in manifest Anglo-Saxons. Whatever the case may be, there is an Irish psychological personality; it is not without some resemblance to the indigenous aspects of the Welsh originality; and in the Highland Scots analogous characteristics have been pointed out. The linguistic kinship of the dialects emphasizes this vague family consciousness, and supplies it, indeed, with its most substantial element, in spite of the century-old retreat of the Celtic languages, in Great Britain, before the advance of English. Outside the national frontiers, the Bretons of French Brittany are admitted to a place in the ideal unity which tends to revive; and even France, on account of her "Gaulish" descent, is considered by some as part of it.

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[1] 1867–1900. *Verses*, 1896.

[2] 1857–1909. Of a vigorous but embittered poetic talent, a strong pessimist. *Fleet Street Eclogues*, 1893–96; *Ballads and Songs*, 1894; *New Ballads*, 1897; *Last Ballads*, 1899; *The Testament of John Davidson*, 1908, etc. See H. Williams, *Modern English Writers*, 1920.

[3] Max Beerbohm, born in 1872, a caricaturist and essayist, is the most notable survivor of this group. *The Works of Max Beerbohm*, 1896; *Yet Again*, 1909; *Seven Men*, 1919, etc.

During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the writers of Irish birth are merged without any resistance in the current of English literature; the attraction of a more widespread language and a more developed culture rather easily destroys with them the consciousness of their separate nationality. Even those upon whom the stamp of their origin remains most clearly printed—such as Sheridan or Goldsmith—soften down these features, and adapt them to the taste of their English readers. In Scotland, where the flame of intellectual zeal never ceased to burn bright, the spirit of a distinct nationhood among men of letters keeps stronger; Smollett in London does not forget his smaller fatherland; from Allan Ramsay to Burns, the poets of the soil react against the literary centralization then in the making. Burns writes his masterpieces in dialect; Scott quickens the knowledge and love of the national past; the feeling of history is stimulated by Romanticism; and already from that time the revival of all the elements of artistic individuality lying in the kingdoms, the provinces and districts which go to make up the impersonal unity of Great Britain, is being gradually prepared. The political movement aiming at general self-government and federal organization, of which the grant of autonomy to Ireland is the last stage, is later than that rebirth of the feeling of a separate identity, and is derived from it.

The renascence of "Celticism" in English literature coincides with the acuter stage of the "home rule" agitation, without being identified with it. By far the greater number of the persons who take an active share in the Celtic movement are Irish patriots; but every shade of political feeling is represented among them, from the most fiery advocacy of independence to a Platonic sympathy with this cause. In so far as they belong to English literature, that is to say, use English as their means of expression, they find themselves outside the very conditions of a complete spiritual enfranchisement, as imagined or demanded by the out-and-out apostles of Irish political freedom. The latter find only doubtful or suspicious support in the works of a Yeats and a Synge.

The sufferings of Ireland, and her ethnic quality (leaving out Ulster) more homogeneous than that of Scotland, make her the historical centre of those various claims. Along with the memories left by Macpherson's Ossian, it is the Irish character which gives its main features to the popular image of the "Celtic soul," as it appears about the middle of the nineteenth century. The Anglo-Saxon having conquered the world of matter, the Celt demands as his due the kingdom of mind. The measure of dreamy imaginativeness to be found in his old legends, by the side of the most bloody episodes; the inclination to the sad poetry of the heart, and to the fanciful wanderings of the will, which his traditional temperament has preserved, amid flashes of clear-sightedness and moods of matter-of-fact realism, both promote a partly illusory synthesis, according to which the Celtic mind is all made up of melancholy emotion and mysticism. The disquisitions of Matthew Arnold, like those of Renan in France, are at the very root of this simplified notion. Thus, when the "Celtic revival" becomes an actual movement of thought and letters, it takes its stand on psychological data, supposedly established and sure. In so doing, it chooses a place for itself on the inmost plane of the new Romanticism. With the æsthetes and the decadents, a keen intellectuality dominated over the impulses of passion or the senses; pathos itself assumed an artificial look; emotions of the head rather than of the heart adapted themselves readily to a scrupulous elaboration of form, and to the lessons of French technique. On the contrary, with the Celtic revivalists, intelligence once more submits to the free play of a poetical and dreamy imagination.

This is a gradually reached ideal, evolved out of deliberate thinking; there enters into it the now revived self-consciousness of a people and a race. The first writers who lent a voice of her own to modern Ireland cherished a less intense perception of her moral originality. Among novelists, a Carleton,[1] a Lover,[2] a Lever,[3] as well as a Miss Edgeworth, plead for a neglected personality, translate it into another language, interpret it, rather than they express it. Poets, on the other hand, following the lead of Thomas Moore, succeed less imperfectly in catching that subtle essence, the soul of a nation. Such singers as Mangan[4] and Allingham[5] are better attuned to the note which the emancipated sons of a free Ireland nowadays require.

It was between 1885 and 1895 that the movement began as an active and organized crusade. From London, where the first groups were formed, it spread to Dublin. Its leaders—Gavan Duffy, Douglas Hyde, Stopford Brooke—formulated a programme. The culture of Ireland was to be founded on a systematic endeavour to realize intellectual freedom. It was to renew its vigour by being refreshed from the fountain-heads of its originality: Ireland's old texts, legends, tales, poems, which, once translated, were to be developed, so as to supply the invention of writers with themes, and their imagination with visions. Meanwhile a mean was being found between English, a foreign tongue, and Gaelic, the national language, which was lifeless and read only by a few: Douglas Hyde unwittingly achieved a compromise by combining a groundwork of English vocabulary with a number of turns, phrases, dialectal words, in which the influence of Irish syntax and Irish ways of thinking was directly felt. The efforts of this group drew to it young men of talent; literary or dramatic associations, and a national theatre, were successively created.[6]

Through its political and social aspect, which is of the highest interest, this movement is connected with the influences that have brought about the grant of independence to Ireland. It is not possible yet to form an impression as to what the literary life of the enfranchised nation may be; to foresee the ratio in which the British elements will be united with the purely native strains. In the eyes of the historian of literature, the course of the Celtic revival before 1914 is summed up in the study of the personalities who joined it, bringing with them, along with their talents, tendencies of a different nature, and sometimes singularly at variance among themselves.

With Yeats,[7] the affinities of temperament have been at work, exercising a

[1] William Carleton (1794–1869): *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry*, 1830–33, etc.

[2] Samuel Lover (1797–1868): *Rory O'More*, 1837; *Handy Andy*, 1842, etc.

[3] Charles Lever (1806–72): *Harry Lorrequer*, 1839; *Charles O'Malley*, 1841, etc.

[4] J. C. Mangan (1803–49).

[5] William Allingham (1824–89): *Poems*, 1850.

[6] *The Love Songs of Connacht* (1893), of Hyde, are a first example of Anglo-Irish literature. The Irish National Literary Society was founded in 1892 in Dublin; the Irish National Theatre Society in 1903; the Abbey Theatre was opened in 1904.

[7] William Butler Yeats, born in Dublin in 1865, of Protestant family, imbued the influences of his native land before coming into touch with those of England and the Continent; he collected *Poems and Ballads of Young Ireland*, *Fairy and Folk Tales of the*

secret magnetism on the rich fund of suggestions stored in the ancient spirit of Ireland, and extracting from it all that could be harmonized with the delicacy of a subtle art. His work is more thoroughly steeped than any other in the imaginative mysticism which, we are told, is the essential attribute of Celticism. The deepest roots of this mysticism are in the old traditions of Ireland; its inspiration, no doubt, derives strong nourishment from the racy sap of the soil. But it draws as well from foreign and distant influences. India and her pantheism come in for a growing share in it; and French symbolism has been more and more responsible for the general manner of its expression. Yeats's poetry has become increasingly intellectual. It possessed, and still has, precious gifts of nature; it knew how to raise with words the spell of a mysterious atmosphere, how to efface the outlines of material objects in a dreamy mistiness, and to draw the most aerial and spare images upon this thin grey background, in the style of a Japanese engraving. A laboured and occasionally obscure reflection, with its intentions and studied effects, has since the time of his first collections of verse too often veiled those fugitive and charming glimpses. His own note, and the most striking, is still in the Ossian-like evocations, intensified by all the modern science of the inexpressible (*The Wanderings of Oisin*), and in the ethereal grace of his early poems.

It is no less definitely the lyricism of imagination that gives life to his dramas. Their value does not lie in the action or the characters. Beauty here arises from a tender or tragic symbolism, through which are dimly seen the features of sentiment and of reverie, or those of heroism and suffering, which mingle in the moral figure of Ireland. *The Land of Heart's Desire,* a little masterpiece, in which the wistful aspiration to the beyond, the eternal restlessness of unsatisfied hearts, are crystallized in a pure allegory; and *Cathleen ni Hoolihan,* in which the symbol rises to the breadth and poignant force of a patriotic emotion, are the highest achievements of this series of plays.

A conscious and truth-loving mind, Yeats is a penetrating analyst. He looses the complexes of temperaments and the complexities of values through the suppleness of his intuitions; he disentangles and classifies their shades by means of his lucid intelligence. He remains the poet in his judgments, and one whole side of his nature makes him akin to the school of critics moulded by the influence of the Elizabethans. His varied work will probably live, if enfranchised Ireland should give birth to an original literature, as a distinguished blending of the national spirit with British and European culture; as a transition between the literary ideal of yesterday, and that of to-morrow, which bids fair to be more strongly individualized.

It is to the same fusion that the plays of Synge[1] owe their very intense character. In the present case the blending is bolder, so much so that a paradox

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Irish Peasantry, 1888; *Representative Irish Tales,* 1890. His original work consists of poems: *Mosada,* 1886; *The Wanderings of Oisin,* 1889; *Poems,* 1895; *The Wind among the Reeds,* 1899; *Poems,* 1906; *Responsibilities,* 1914, etc.; collected studies in criticism: *The Celtic Twilight,* 1893; *The Secret Rose,* 1897; *Ideas of Good and Evil,* 1903; *Discoveries,* 1907, etc.; dramas: *The Countess Cathleen,* 1892; *The Land of Heart's Desire,* 1894; *The Shadowy Waters,* 1900; *Cathleen ni Hoolihan,* 1902; *The Hour Glass, On Baile's Strand,* 1903; *The King's Threshold, The Pot of Broth,* 1904; *Deirdre,* 1907; *The Green Helmet,* 1910; *Four Plays for Dancers,* 1921. *Collected Works,* 1908; *Plays for an Irish Theatre,* 1911. See H. S. Krans, *W. B. Yeats and the Irish Literary Revival,* 1904; F. Reid, *W. B. Yeats, a Critical Study,* 1915; J. M. Hone, *W. B. Yeats,* 1916.

[1] John Millington Synge, born in 1871, of Anglo-Irish stock, studied at Trinity College, Dublin, sojourned in France, travelled in Italy and in Germany; on the advice of Yeats, he went in quest of primitive life and a virgin language to the Aran Islands, to the west of Ireland; wrote dramas: *In the Shadow of the Glen* (staged in 1903, published in 1905); *Riders to the Sea* (staged in 1904, published in 1905); *The Well of the Saints, The Playboy of the Western World, The Tinker's Wedding,* 1907; he published a descriptive study, *The Aran Islands,* 1907; *Poems and Translations,* 1909, and died in the latter year, leaving a drama, *Deirdre of the Sorrows,* 1910. *Works,* 1911; *Dramatic Works,*

seems to lurk in it; but as a compensation the result is more highly flavoured. The artistic sensibility of Synge obeys very different impulses. He too perceives the poetry of wonder, of which Irish imagination is so fond; he loves the sudden flights in which the spirited words of a tramp will soar to the highest utterance; he feels the thrills of the harsh glens of a wild land, the barbarous superstitions of its most backward nooks, the dramas which the sea enacts round its shores. But it is as a realist that he sees the mixture of epic and farce of which Irish life is often made; he exalts both tragedy and poetry to their greatest intensity at supreme moments, and on the other hand finds a broad, familiar, almost vulgar vein of comedy in the texture of daily experience. His studies of manners are thus pitched in the key of humour, for which Yeats made allowance less liberally. And the continental school of art, whose spell he feels and whose method he puts into practice, is that of naturalism. In Paris he has breathed the atmosphere of irony, of powerfully condensed style, of absolute submission to a trivial and disconcerting object, of philosophical and scientific bitterness, in which the "fin-de-siècle" literature is bathed. He has absorbed as well the stirring, moving influences blown from Russia and Scandinavia. Although the founders of the young Irish theatre are instinct with a spirit of reaction against the absolute sway which the Ibsenian model was wielding over the European stage, there is a suggestion of *Rosmersholm* in *The Shadow of the Glen.*

The merry irreverent Ireland of *The Tinker's Wedding,* of *The Well of the Saints,* the naïvely and poetically unmoral Ireland of *The Playboy,* has thus inspired him no less, or even more, than that of the funeral lament in which a peasant woman, weeping over the last of her sons, acknowledges the dark power of Fate in the very manner of Greek drama (*Riders to the Sea*). Synge died before he could express himself fully. While his work is highly esteemed by the cultivated élite and by a cosmopolitan public, it is subjected to impassioned discussion in his own country. Its note, indeed, jars surprisingly with the purpose of national idealization which lives at the core of the Celtic revival. In the eyes of a foreign observer, this work deserves the credit of depicting some aspects at least of Ireland with a vigorous broad touch. The technique of Synge's dramas, though far from unexceptionable, is of high worth. His language is at the same time popular and artistic, and while eminently artificial, it is no less expressive and typical; it achieves to a unique degree the miracle of a dialectal colouring produced by the use of scrupulously English words, and gives "Anglo-Irish" its decisive model. It remains Synge's most valuable literary asset.

Besides Synge and Yeats, a less rapid survey should dwell at some length upon almost equally significant talents, like those of G. W. Russell,[1] whose serious poetry is instinct with a glowing pantheism; of Lionel Johnson,[2] who died prematurely, after writing delicately inspired verse and brilliant critical essays; of Lady Gregory,[3] one of the leaders of the Irish national theatre, the author of plays finely poised between comedy and farce; of Edward Martyn,[4]

1915. See Fr. Bickley, *J. M. Synge and the Irish Dramatic Movement,* 1912; P. P. Howe, *J. M. Synge, a Critical Study,* 1912; M. Bourgeois, *J. M. Synge and the Irish Theatre,* 1913.

[1] George W. Russell, known by the pseudonym of "A. E."; born in 1867, a poet, painter, critic and economist, one of the noblest figures in the Irish intellectual movement. His poems comprise: *Homeward; Songs by the Way,* 1894; *The Earth Breath,* 1897; *By Still Waters,* 1906; *Deirdre,* 1907, etc. *Collected Poems,* 1913. See Darrell Figgis, *A. E.,* 1915.

[2] 1867–1902. *Poems,* 1895; *Ireland, with Other Poems,* 1897.

[3] Lady S. A. Gregory, born in 1852, popularized the folklore of Ireland, and wrote for the Abbey Theatre. *Gods and Fighting Men,* 1904; *Seven Short Plays,* 1909; *Irish Folk History Plays,* 1912; *New Comedies,* 1913, etc.

[4] Born in 1859. *The Heather Field,* 1899.

Padraic Colum,[1] James Stephens,[2] Katharine Tynan,[3] etc. The young Anglo-Irish literature has a wealth of original writers; but none of them seems so far to equal the masters of the previous generation. The fulfilled dream of national self-government sets this school a still unsolved problem, as to the choice it now has to make between the tradition of compromise, and the possibilities of cultural independence.

The ironical and detached personality of George Moore[4] evades this dilemma. Through his origins, and at least one phase of his career, he belongs to the Celtic revival; through his individualism, and his versatility, he belongs only to himself. He was, however, intimately connected with this movement, and for a while lent it the support of his pen, in exchange for an inspiration and the help of a group; but when the community of interests thus realized came to an end, he felt free in his autobiography to give the world the most piquant relation of the years when he had shared in a common illusion. It must be acknowledged that the works written under the sway of this illusion are somewhat artificial; for if George Moore's temperament shows in its making many and obvious Irish tendencies, the strongest is that of intellectual indiscipline.

It is difficult precisely to define the inner and special quality of his nature. One should not set too much store by the realism of his beginnings, since he was then strongly influenced by the literature of France. The Goncourts, Zola, Huysmans, were his first masters. It seems possible, however, to assert that naturalism did answer to one of the deeper needs of his being, to that desire for a challenging frankness which his work has never ceased to reveal. In symbolism, again, another side of his mind found satisfaction. George Moore reconciles the audacity of crude, brutal observation with the sensuous refinement of a voluptuous æsthete; the search for artistic emotions is with him a kind of idealism; and the keen interest which he takes in spiritual anguish, and which made its influence ever obscurely felt, has become in the long run one of his main motives. The author of *Flowers of Passion* and *Mike Fletcher* is as well that of *The Brook Kerith.*

His development reflects the course of a half-century; and in every chapter of recent literary history his work is sure of a mention. It represents one of the extreme stages reached, in Great Britain, by the contagious craving for aggressive truth which had come over from France; it sketches the paradoxical line which the demand for experimental truth followed, when it was deflected towards the quest for symbolical and refined imagination; again, it reveals the link that connects æstheticism with the Celtic movement; lastly, it shows the transition from the morbid restlessness of the "nineties" to the vague or precise religious yearnings of the twentieth century. At every stage of this changeful career, the care of form remains an element of conscientiousness and continuity.

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[1] Born in 1881; poet and dramatist; linked up the Celtic renascence with the movement for Irish independence.

[2] Born in 1882; poet and novelist. *Insurrections,* 1909; *The Crock of Gold,* 1912; *The Hill of Vision,* 1912, etc.

[3] Poet, novelist, critic. *Irish Love Songs,* 1892, etc.

[4] George Moore, born in Ireland in 1852, was the son of a Member of Parliament; educated privately, he had no material cares and devoted himself to literature. He resided for a considerable time in Paris, and under French influences formed his notion of art; wrote verse: *Flowers of Passion,* 1877; *Pagan Poems,* 1881; novels or short stories: *A Modern Lover,* 1883; *A Mummer's Wife,* 1884; *A Drama in Muslin,* 1886; *A Mere Accident,* 1887; *Mike Fletcher,* 1889; *Esther Waters,* 1894; *Celibates,* 1895; *Evelyn Innes,* 1896; *Sister Teresa,* 1901; *The Lake,* 1905, etc.; works of literary or æsthetic criticism: *Impressions and Opinions,* 1890; *Modern Paintings,* 1893; a religious novel: *The Brook Kerith,* 1916; an historical novel: *Abélard and Héloïse,* 1921; plays: *The Bending of the Bough,* 1900; *The Coming of Gabrielle,* 1921; an autobiography in four main volumes: *Confessions of a Young Man,* 1888; *Hail and Farewell: Ave,* 1911, *Salve,* 1912, *Vale,* 1914. See Susan L. Mitchell, *George Moore,* 1916.

Neither the poet, nor the novelist, nor in the definite sense of the word the critic, is among the foremost writers of his kind. The man who stands behind them and makes them one is a figure of lasting interest, whose most original trait must probably be found in the witty mischievous verve of *Ave, Salve, Vale*.

5. **Francis Thompson.**—Francis Thompson[1] deserves to be studied apart. His talent shows extreme complexity. He belongs to his own time through the mysticism of his inspiration, and the symbolism of his vision. Moreover, as had been the case with the Romanticists of the early nineteenth century, the preferences of his taste return to the ardour and the freedom of the Elizabethans; but in him the desire for subtlety tends to outdo that for exuberance; and it is to the "metaphysical" poets of the seventeenth century that he chooses to give his homage. Lastly, he keeps, and pushes even farther, that search for a style enriched with elaborate ornament, which Keats had illustrated pre-eminently, and by which the age which immediately preceded Thompson's had no less liked to soothe the classicism of its instincts. He thus appears as an original, but somewhat unstable and artificial, synthesis of manifold literary lines of descent; he unites the memory of Milton with that of Crashaw, the influence of the Pre-Raphaelites with that of Coventry Patmore. A temperament endowed with personal gifts saves him from unduly passive imitation.

The focus of his moral being is faith—he is a Roman Catholic, like the two poets whom he most deeply admires, Coventry Patmore and Crashaw. From this belief he draws the feeling of the divine in nature and man, and an earnest and delicate spirituality. His thought owes it no less the craving, an ever-unsatisfied one, for the intellectual formulæ in which reason, before its final abdication, attempts to grasp and solve the riddle of things. As his imagination and his ear, on the other hand, are fond of the polysyllabic sonorousness of rare compound words, and of the cadence of an ecclesiastical vocabulary, his highly wrought language has the golden radiance of a missal, and is not free from some scholastic affectation. At the opposite end of his range, he has moments of rapt simplicity, in which there is still heard an ecstatic and poignant note, which would reach the level of the highest art, were it not that the inner strain is betrayed by sudden breaks, occasional falls into spurious pathos or prosaism.

A talent linked to suffering, Thompson has written, amidst the pains of a grievous life, some masterpieces filled with a strangely sumptuous and ample harmony, in which amplitude and sumptuousness are not always reconciled, and in which poetry at times is the loser for their secret struggle. The instants of their union possess a supreme beauty, which reminds one of Keats; but even more beautiful are those in which breadth of inspiration predominates, and enforces its sway. *The Hound of Heaven* has a majesty, a fullness of utterance which go beyond the *Odes*, with their more ambitious orchestral effects and dazzling style.

Thompson's prose is a confirmation of his poetry; it shows that the refined archaism of the latter was rooted in his sincerest instincts. His critical essay on Shelley has bold flights, and often striking felicities, of imaginative impressionism.[2]

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[1] Francis Thompson, born in 1860, the son of a doctor, studied medicine, which he abandoned for the theatre; experienced great hardship in London; was taken under the protection of Mr. and Mrs. Meynell, and published a volume of verse: *Poems*, 1893; then *Sister Songs*, 1895; *New Poems*, 1897. He died in 1907. An essay on Shelley appeared in 1908. *Selected Poems*, ed. by W. Meynell, 1911; *Works*, 3 vols., 1923. See K. Rooker, *Francis Thompson*, 1913; Everard Meynell, *Life of Francis Thompson*, 1913.

[2] By the piety of her remembrance as by the affinity of the religious sentiment, the name of Mrs. Alice Meynell is associated with that of Thompson. Born in 1850, she published *Preludes*, 1875; *Poems*, 1893; *Later Poems*, 1901. Her fine and discreet talent has a charming simplicity in the sober expression of the emotions.

To be consulted: M. Bourgeois, *John M. Synge and the Irish Theatre,* 1913; E. A. Boyd, *Ireland's Literary Renaissance,* 1916; idem, *The Contemporary Drama of Ireland,* 1917; *Cambridge History of English Literature,* vol. xiii. chaps. v. vi.; vol. xiv. chaps. iii. vii. ix.; J. W. Cunliffe, *English Literature during the Last Half-Century,* 1920; Holbrook Jackson, *The Eighteen-Nineties,* 1913; E. Meynell, *The Life of Francis Thompson,* 1913; L. R. Morris, *The Celtic Dawn,* 1917; B. Muddiman, *The Men of the Nineties,* 1920; W. L. Phelps, *The Advance of the English Novel,* 1916; E. T. Raymond, *Portraits of the Nineties,* 1921; P. de Reul, *L'Œuvre de Swinburne,* 1922; A. Thomas, *A. C. Swinburne, a Critical Study,* 1912; G. Turquet-Milnes, *The Influence of Baudelaire in France and England,* 1913; H. Walker, *The Literature of the Victorian Era,* 1910; H. Williams, *Modern English Writers,* 1920.

CHAPTER IV

THE DOCTRINES OF ACTION

1. **The Rallying Purposes.**—The end of the nineteenth century, and the beginning of the twentieth, make up a single literary period. This means that the relative unity of some predominant characteristics makes itself felt. But the unity of this age consists in a unifying background of disquietude. The numerous tendencies with which it is stirred, after the breaking up of the Victorian equilibrium, lay at its core a deep-set restlessness through their divergence.

If the age is surveyed, however, in a wider perspective, its inner disorder is simplified into some sort of progression. Within the chronological limits thus laid down, a movement appears. The passing from one century to another actually answers to a change in thought. After 1900, the doctrines of action assert themselves; they attempt, each to its own advantage, to re-create the harmony of minds. The criticism which had been brought to bear on intellectualism had destroyed its prestige, without setting up anything in its place; the new Romanticism had freed imagination, desire and dream from all restraining rule, and had followed them on their adventurous ways. Before its course is run out, it renews itself through a last extension of its principle. The beginning of the twentieth century sees simple straight lines of energy and exertion, traced by the driving power of the will, draw themselves out more clearly over the confused background of a period at the same time Romantic and intellectual.

The self-assertion of the will is a revulsion of the vital instinct, a reaction against the deliquescence in which the nineteenth century had ended. This bracing up of moral energy, plainly announced and proclaimed by its apostles, coincides in Great Britain with a very definite hardening of the national purpose; the South African war, its first reverses, its uncertainties, the strain it calls for, the direct and primitive emotions it rouses, give the signal which a whole people has been waiting for with uneasiness, frightened already or shocked as it was in its determination to live. The morbid elements of æstheticism, pessimism and decadentism are denounced and condemned; henceforth they hide themselves, and both society and literature are encouraged to feel free from a passing taint. It might seem as if the South African war, an accidental circumstance, had not been the deeper cause of events. An identical need in other countries—for example in France—was producing similar effects, without a war. The generation which comes to manhood after 1900 is bent on deciding through action the insoluble problems, over which the mind of its predecessor had vainly worried.

Action is the common theme of the doctrines which appeal to will. Through acting, it is sought to cure the conflicting desires of an undisciplined age. But as this lack of discipline is a moral fact, derived from the agitations of the soul, it makes itself felt as well in the plane of action. The doctrines which point out how to act are divided by mutual hostility. Divergent instincts are still the animating force of Kipling's imperialism, of Chesterton's traditionalism, of Shaw's and Wells's socialism; and these partial syntheses, confronting one another, introduce a simplified order into the war of tendencies, without putting an end to it.

These doctrines at least, in a certain sense, are of very similar nature; one outstanding psychological trait makes them alike. Each of them, aiming at social salvation by means of a strict convergence forced upon men's minds and hearts, demands a rallying of all purposes, and more or less imperiously points out the road that leads to it. Thus, in so far as their central endeavour is concerned, they all react against the disconnected aims of a period destitute of moral unity. They prepare the way for the desire of convergence which seems to be once more a trait of the period we are now entering; and for that organization in which it would seem, from certain symptoms, that the after-war period were seeking the means of a new equilibrium, intellectual in its principle, and somewhat analogous to former classical phases.

2. Imperialism: Henley; Kipling.—Henley's[1] personality is more interesting than his work. He is a sign of a current of instinctive thought which has never ceased to flow obscurely through the life and literature of England since the sixteenth century; a current which had hardly ever before made itself plainly recognizable through direct expression, but which entered, mingled with other elements, into the doctrines or feelings of many thinkers. In the nineteenth century, Carlyle and Kingsley had most clearly revealed its presence and influence. Henley is a spiritual heir to both; but he is chiefly a contemporary of Kipling. His existence prevents the inspiration of *The Seven Seas* from standing out as an exception in its time, and connects it with a more normal background of sentiment.

He has the temperament of imperialism. It is only in some parts of his poems that he celebrates and worships the Empire; but the magnetism of its presence is always upon him; he carries within himself the emotions and desires whose united influence is even then stimulating the imperial religion, and imparting to it the fresh contagious power of a new-born faith. Henley's moral being finds its central unity in an intense reaction against the unhealthy subtlety of an over-refined civilization; he knows intuitively the peril created by the weakening of national energy; he already possesses, and he discovers in himself, a remedy for this evil in the elementary and primitive virtue of effort. Being incapable of intellectual complexity, he protests against the corrupt search for the unfelt, through which the vitality of the race is running out. While his own body is disabled, he has that impassioned love of strength which many invalids feed on the purely internal exercise of the will. Probing below the culture of centuries, he reaches and brings back to daylight the ancient store of ancestral instincts. Beyond the spirit of the Elizabethan sea-dogs, it is that of the Anglo-Saxon pirates he seems at times to revive, so distinctly heathenish is with him the enthusiasm of fighting.

His rough lines have energy, a robust hold on reality. Their worth lies in the poetical transfiguring of the concrete, produced, not by imagination or by the spiritual sweetness which dissolves the hard cruel facts of life, but by an original idealizing process, with simple sober devices. Whether the themes are the experiences of a patient in a hospital, or sights and scenes in the roaring turmoil of London, his method is a realism which the evocative power and the dense suggestive vigour of the phrasing raise to sudden heights. These soarings reveal an artist, whose range includes the audacity and the achievements of the most modern style of writing; his personal touch is the note of defiance, the abruptness of a man who, even while he spreads these felicities over his page, pretends not to condescend to the labour of form. Again, Henley is gifted with a sense of rhythm, knows how to handle the technique of his art, even practises it at times with some artificial fondness, in pieces where the national poet that he is allows himself to be tempted by the nimbleness of French metrical combinations; but he neither desires nor reaches the most subtle effects, and he is capable of the most jolting, careless lines. If he sings at all, it is in order to pay homage to his goddesses—dangerous life, adventure, and the sacred battles of the Anglo-Saxon race; it is as well to tell his courageous philosophy, his vision of a world in which pain is alleviated only by love and noble risks.

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[1] William Ernest Henley, born in 1849 at Gloucester, led the life of an invalid; from his experiences in Edinburgh Hospital, he drew the material for his first poems; after a difficult beginning he published *A Book of Verses*, 1888; *The Song of the Sword* (later *London Voluntaries*), 1892; *Hawthorn and Lavender*, 1899; *For England's Sake*, 1900. He wrote for the stage in collaboration with his friend Stevenson; directed the *Outlook* and *National Observer*; collected his articles on literary and artistic criticism in two volumes of *Views and Reviews*, 1890–1901; and died in 1903. See the study by L. C. Cornford (*W. E. Henley*), 1913.

As a journalist and critic, Henley is a fighter. His judgments are opinionated, often severe, and more brilliant than persuasive. So strong was the magnetic appeal of simple energy in an age of moral confusion, that his work and his manner attracted young talents. He was imitated, and exerted an influence.

Kipling However great the art of Kipling[1] may be, it is not looked at in a wrong perspective if the writer is replaced in a movement of the national consciousness, which he has chosen to serve. No less than to the history of literary forms, he belongs to that of the mind of a people. No one has done more to give permanence to the imperialist feeling in the making, by means of pregnant words, and of moving or stirring images and rhythms. The years just before and after the South African war are those when was widely diffused through Great Britain the political, moral and concrete notion of the Empire, a vast and varied commonwealth of lands and societies, linked to one centre by ties of origin, of interest and instinct. While statesmen grasped the possibilities included in a fact which their conscious will had never contributed to create, and were anxious to strengthen and develop it; while scientists explored it, studied its resources or told its progress, it was given to a man of letters to make it supremely and most deeply actual by implanting it among the familiar and intimate ideas of all men. It is from Kipling that to the majority of the English the existence of the Empire dates back. Again, he has been most efficient in imparting to the scattered nations, born of a common mother, the active realization of their human relationship both to her and to one another. His words have inwoven perhaps the strongest threads with the warp and woof of Empire.

The writer who has thus incorporated himself with the moral destiny of the

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[1] Rudyard Kipling, born in Bombay in 1865, of parents of English birth and Wesleyan religion, spent his early years in India, received a secondary education in England, returned to India at the age of eighteen, took up journalism in addition to the study of Indian life, British officialdom and soldiering. He published a collection of verse: *Departmental Ditties*, 1886; short stories: *Plain Tales from the Hills, Soldiers Three, etc., In Black and White, Under the Deodars, The Phantom Rickshaw, etc., Wee Willie Winkie, etc.*, 1888. He set out for England by way of Japan and America, writing articles which were later collected in a volume (*From Sea to Sea*, 1900). Discovered by the English public about 1890, he tried his skill in a continued novel, *The Light That Failed*, 1891, and returned to the short story in *Life's Handicap*, 1891; *Many Inventions*, 1893; *The Jungle Book*, 1894; *The Second Jungle Book*, 1895; *The Day's Work*, 1898. A series of descriptive, didactic poems, meanwhile, illustrated the forces and horizons of the Empire: *Barrack Room Ballads*, 1892; *The Seven Seas*, 1896; *The Five Nations*, 1903. A new period opened with a novel, *Kim*, 1901; tales for the young (*Captains Courageous*, 1897; *Stalky and Co.*, 1899) now took the form of freer inventions, of a more wonderful or historical colouring: *Just-So Stories*, 1902; *Traffics and Discoveries*, 1904; *Puck of Pook's Hill*, 1906; *Actions and Reactions*, 1909; *Rewards and Fairies*, 1910. Kipling wrote also: *A School History of England*, 1911; *The Years Between*, 1919; *Letters of Travel*, 1920; *Land and Sea Tales*, 1923. *Works*, Pocket ed. See the studies by Le Gallienne (*Rudyard Kipling, a Criticism*), 1900; C. Charles (*Rudyard Kipling, Life and Works*), 1911; R. Durand (*Handbook to Poetry of Rudyard Kipling*), 1914; H. Jackson (*Rudyard Kipling, a Critical Study*), 1914; R. T. Hopkins (*Rudyard Kipling*), 1915; C. Falls (*Rudyard Kipling*), 1915; J. L. Palmer (*Rudyard Kipling:* Writers of the Day), 1915; Chevrillon (*Trois études de littérature anglaise*), 1921; *Bibliography of the Works of Rudyard Kipling*, by E. W. Martindell, 1922.

British race seemed hardly marked out, by his birth, to express and actualize its most central will. Born in India, he felt exotic influences before he trod the soil of England; his mental formation was mixed, and exceptional. He knew the so rigid frame of purely English society and manners only from the outside, before he could joyfully and proudly fit himself in. But there is no mystery about the whole process. Kipling's parents were both English, and of the Wesleyan denomination; they were thus directly connected with spiritual strains which are among the most average and typical in Great Britain. The skies of India, the hot wild breath of the jungle, quickened in the boy's nerves a power of vivid sensation which is a constant trait of the Anglo-Saxon. The originality which he drew from the uprooting of his family has thus intensified in him the temperament of his race, without altering it. This more acute perception, turning to self-analysis, has through the sentiment of a personal difference thrown light upon the general and permanent background of common tendencies. As will be the case with the beings to whom initiation into the soul of a group comes late and consciously—people from overseas and naturalized citizens of all kinds—the mixed experience of Kipling's youth has stimulated in him, far from obscuring it, the inner possession of nationality.

The theme of the Empire appears in his writings from the first, but in implicit forms. It becomes gradually more definite; still the earliest tales in which British rule in India is shown at work temper their discreet panegyric with many touches of free irony. The simple heroism of the officer on the Afghan frontier, of the civil servant in famine time, of the engineer facing a flood, progressively turns into a privileged motive; the love of adventure glorifies all the pioneers and the reckless sons of the race; over lands and oceans, from the polar ice to the deserts of the torrid zone, the brotherhood of silent, stubborn effort appears. The characters of soldiers whom Kipling creates, and fills with a richly picturesque individuality, contribute to break down the barrier of ignorance which divided the professional army from the civilian population. From the *Barrack Room Ballads* to *The Seven Seas,* the progression is plain; in the latter, the destiny of the chosen people, called by Providence to explore, to exploit and to watch over the seas, and through them the continents, is the main inspiration of the series. Before the war in South Africa, Kipling had already discovered his patriotic vocation; he had become the prophet of the imperial ideal. *The Five Nations,* written after the war and its trials, proclaims the gospel of unity, such as it is, and must be.

The doctrine is first founded upon facts—those facts which Carlyle had already invested with an incomparable majesty. There are strong races, and weak ones; the clash between them is inevitable, and the victory of the strong is the wish of Nature. Kipling's philosophy accepts the lessons which his age feels entitled to draw from a diffused evolutionism. The past of the British race illustrates its robust hold on reality; its expansion is a proof of its superiority in the struggle. To extol the solidarity which unites its scattered branches, is to increase its sense of vigour, and thus its vigour itself; it is to contribute to the fulfilment of fate. The conquering people is under moral obligations towards those whom it controls; but it will seek their good through ways of its own choosing; and meekness and humanity are an adornment which it owes to itself, the token of a strength which can be self-regulating, an insurance against the psychological risks of power. These spiritual softenings must never reach the deeper stores of an energy which is always to remain tight and ready for action. In the mutual intercourse of the British, stress is laid more plainly on reciprocal duties. The individual shall submit to the laws of the pack. He shall know how to suffer and keep silent, and sacrifice himself to the safety of the group. He shall have all the virtues which spring from self-mastery; for this mastery is justice, and charity has no other root. Education shall aim at shaping leaders. The worth of a man is measured by his ability to command either himself, or others.

In course of time, this soldier-like code of ethics is eked out with the rough outline of a religious idealism. A Providence glimmers through the struggle for life. The mysterious restlessness which drives the sons of the race beyond the boundaries of the known, is the call of a holy mission. The Empire is a disinterested responsibility; it is the "white man's burden." Towards the God of the Bible, who has lavished his gifts upon His chosen people, their thanksgivings must rise, so that He may never forsake them. This free Christianity is not pharisaical; it implies no inner self-deceit. Its apparent lie answers to the sincere working of a thought which does not seek truth independently of action. Many other minds, both in England and elsewhere, have associated the religion of the Old Testament, or even that of Christ, with the triumphs of force. Kipling, here, finds himself on common ground with almost all the anti-intellectualists; and his point of view is not far distant from that of the supporters of authority and tradition in principle.

Upon this background of ideas, where neither much that is new, nor much that is noble enough to be morally revealing is to be found, and the creative power of which is derived from circumstances, the temperament of an exceptionally gifted writer stands out in strong relief. Kipling possesses to the highest degree the ancestral faculty of concrete perception, uphampered by any interposed mist of mental culture. He has sensations of extraordinary intensity and variety, and takes in the most minute as well as the most overwhelming external appeals. An eminent gift of words sets off this faculty; or rather, a command of all the resources of language meets the working of sensitiveness half-way, helping the latter to increase its range and precision. Kipling knows how to turn all vocabularies to use; but he hardly chooses that of subtlety and of abstract shades, except to express humorous intentions, or, on rare occasions, a mood of poetical serenity; his special province is the vast domain of Germanic words, which are still loaded with primitive and direct meanings, and which a town-made civilization tends to ignore and forget. He rediscovers them, and refreshes them through the strikingly expressive aptness of their use. To these he adds the various stocks of technical words, military and naval slang, terms borrowed from all the dialects of the Empire. The joy he feels in rare, sonorous, suggestive syllables, full of the odours and the hues of particular landscapes and things, is ever an essential element in the mental attraction which brings him to write; the verbal aspect of his intellectual activity is extremely developed. Therefore, neglecting or scorning the play of thought, he has bent his energy towards the material universe, its sights, its crises and struggles, and human souls in their forcible intercourse with it, whether in co-operation or conflict.

The short story is the fittest frame for an art of intensity, in which strong effects are led to condensation of form by their very vigour. Kipling has shown an instinctive sense of this literary kind. Stages can be pointed out in his apprenticeship; but from the first attempt he is in this field a master. Into the atmosphere of the cultured circles of India, and that of an English secondary school, which he breathed, the spell of cosmopolitan artistic influences had found its way; the concentrated tales of Maupassant and his rivals had created an international model, the magnetism of which did not leave him untouched. Everything else, in his development, came from himself. He moves at ease in the limits of the short story, because his imagination knows no sure realizations but those of an immediate kind. The choice of a situation, of a tragic or comic unfolding of facts, or a striking aspect of things, is an art to which Kipling brings the ready energy of his nature. The selection of the essential, the rejection of the accessory, owe their sureness to the same strength of unfailing mental vision. The conciseness of the style is made of the expressive force of each single word. The movement with which the narration is impelled strikes us as being that of direct experience; the successive phases in the story develop one from another with the pressing necessity of the moments when life, like a superior power, forces itself upon us. These numberless episodes are governed by a fate which is the subconscious judgment of the artist; it is often dramatic, at times ironical or indulgent, but always imperious.

The subjects thus treated make up altogether a vast picture of the world, or of the several provinces which the writer singles out according to the preferences of his tastes, of his more familiar acquaintance. Kipling's short stories organize themselves readily into cycles. There is one of India, with the life of the English in the foreground, and occasional glimpses into the strange, picturesque, disquieting underworld of native manners; that of the army and colonial campaigns; that of the navy or the merchant fleet; that of travel and exoticism; that of steam and machines; that of realism, with some inlets of social study; that of the supernatural and the marvellous; that of the animal universe, and the jungle. Each of them has its special surroundings, described with broad evocative touches. Wrought up and developed landscapes are rare with Kipling; but so efficient is the power of his vision, and of his language, that he fills us with the constant presence of Nature, in all the moods of the earth, the sky and the waters; and bathes all our senses in her irresistible radiance. Accentuated states, violent effects, are sought by him rather than notes of sweetness and grace. It is only in the latest phase of his career that he seems to have evinced, when treating English subjects, a new fondness for the half-tones and sober accents of a country with an old humanized charm. Whatever he may purpose to describe, each one of his words calls up more shapes, and invests them with richer sensitive appeals, than those of any English writer before him.

In those descriptions, and in the life lent to inhuman things, from the jungle and the wind to the engine of a steamer—seized as they are inside with an extraordinary intuition, animated in a manner comparable to that of Shelley's poetry, but with an existence less uniformly quivering, more distinct, colder, and so to say more objective—lies the outstanding quality of this picture of the world. The effects of strangeness, of anguish, even of mystery, are also one of the fruitful resources of Kipling's art; they superadd to the dramatic intensity of experience, and to the overwhelming grandeur of the universe, a something which belongs to a higher order, a more subtle element, a kind of poetry. This impassioned lover of nature is alive to the supernatural; and his positive mind is no less mystic, as is revealed, for example, by that poem of the secret and obstinate worship of an intangible ideal, *To the True Romance*. On the contrary, the properly human aspects of his tales move us less vividly.

The reason is not that he fails to draw characters that our sense of reality can accept. It would be a hasty and unjustified assumption to conclude that his genius is restricted to the scope of the short story, and that his longer tales—*The Light That Failed*, *Kim*, etc.—are of inferior worth. These novels have merits of their own, and the latter reaches a breadth of range in the picture of a very complex and very special world, which by itself justifies it. They both give ample scope to psychology; and the personages on whom the light is focused are outlined with a remarkable, though simplified clearness. On the whole, however, Kipling does not burrow very deep into the souls of men, nor does he care to do so. Human beings are to him summed up in a few significant features, which exhaust the substance of a personality because they reveal, at one stroke, all that it is material we should know, to our sense of action or of the picturesque. Minute and gratuitous analyses are not to his taste; he feels that they are injurious to the health of the inner life, and to that of art. Only the speaking traits of faces, and the expressive countenances of souls, are interesting to him. The figures he has created are most often distinguished by an unforgettable individuality of outline. In what concerns psychology, the subjects which he has treated with the greatest partiality, and the best success, are those where the very nature of the characters admits of and indeed demands simplicity—varieties of the soldier type, fully individualized and highly flavoured, but of rather rudimentary intelligence; schoolboys and growing young men; before all, those wonderful sketches of animals, each having its natural shape, and at the same time a moral personality fitted to this shape with astonishing sureness. In many respects, the *Jungle Books* are, if not Kipling's masterpiece, at least his most representative work.

With no writer are the prosaist and the poet more closely connected, or do they show a more indissoluble unity. The matter, and the inspiration, are with both the same; Kipling's poetry hardly intensifies the denseness of a prose already so energetic and solid. Rhythm only adds to it a musical element, in which tones of vigour exclusively predominate, and which, rather primitive as its artistic quality may be, still produces the desired effects with an often absolute felicity. These effects belong mostly to the sphere of concrete suggestion, imitative harmony, the joy of physical exertion and humour; at times, to that of mysteriousness and dream. Although alliteration does not play any regular prosodic part in the verse of Kipling, it is so frequent, and so efficacious, that it betrays an instinctive affinity of the mètre with the Anglo-Saxon line. This poetry is thus altogether rough and popular; its style and lilt remind the reader of the old English ballads; and its tone, its themes, its language, clashed so abruptly and strongly with the elegant refinement of the followers of Pre-Raphaelitism and of Tennyson, that to many its success came as a shock; but its hold upon a broader public was immediate, and will be lasting.

For into their brutality, cynicism, or prosaic vulgarity, those poems infuse the flavoured or intoxicating essence of a vision of things which lacks neither grandeur, nor heroism, nor beauty. The *Barrack Room Ballads,* though very unequal, often approach a perfect fullness of expression through the still untapped resources of slang or of the most naïve language; while in *The Seven Seas, The Five Nations,* the outlook grows wider; here it is actually the annals and glories of the Empire that are sung; and if these hymns savour in no way of official pomp, their dignity is made up of the oldest as well as the most living claims; the words which they use are at the same time those of the English Bible, and of the crowd of the workers—colonists, soldiers, sailors, civil engineers, engine drivers—who have created the strength of the Empire. In spite of all, Kipling's poetry has a democratic ring, and in some respects it resembles that of Whitman. He has written no more elaborate study of a soul than *MacAndrew's Hymn;* and the epic breadth of many pieces, such as *The Rhyme of the Three Sealers,* is surpassed by nothing in modern English literature.

There is still another Kipling, that of subdued tales, in which the supernatural strain is nearer to tradition, and where the elves and fairies of Shakespearean folklore revive; whose inspiration is not only imperial, but precisely English; and where in the idyllic scenery of Sussex the succession of ages upon an ancient land is called up by a smilingly fanciful imagination. Nationalism here is gilded with an evening beam, which spreads a serene peace over its haughty brow; one seems to feel, along with a melancholy note, a new toleration, and almost an intellectual relativism. In this light is now drawing to its end the career of a writer still vigorous, but who reached the heights of artistic achievement too early to maintain himself at his own level. *Puck of Pook's Hill, Rewards and Fairies* are charming works; a lesser talent might build his reputation upon them; but they no longer bear the stamp of genius.[1]

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[1] By virtue of their patriotic inspiration and central theme, the sea, the poems of Sir Henry Newbolt (born in 1862; poet and critic) rank next to those of Kipling. *Collected Poems,* 1910.

3. Traditionalism: Chesterton, etc.—The unrest felt by minds which science and reason left confronted with an impassive universe, becomes with the advent of the twentieth century a more active moral force, because it feels itself in more secure sympathy with a movement of opinion. Instead of seeking an outlet in dreams, philosophy, or pessimism, energetic temperaments, instinctively in tune with life or swayed by the need of faith, are thus led to put forth an aggressive justification of their demands. They denounce the present, its materialism, its uncertainties; they seek truth, the peace of the soul, a stable order, in the traditions of the past. Against destructive intelligence, they set up intuition; against the modern disquietude of souls, the happy self-confidence of simple believing ages; against industrial ugliness, the healthy frugality of agricultural civilizations. Taken together, these tendencies are psychologically very similar to those which had supported, fifty years earlier, the movement of idealistic protest whose leaders were Carlyle and Ruskin. Like causes produce like effects; and round Chesterton may be grouped writers with whom the longing for a more authoritative, more humane or more picturesque society continues, at times unwittingly, the eloquent regrets of the prophets of the previous age.

In the field of practice, their desires do not necessarily assume a concrete aspect; they remain often vague; it is in indirect ways that they contribute to action. They swell and confirm a complex of diffused aims, of religious, social, political preferences, which make up one of the two antithetical systems in the literature and thought of the present-day world. Conservative traditionalism, the enemy in principle of pure reason, and in tendency opposed to almost all the changes effected or demanded on the strength of rational programmes, does not to-day occupy so important a place in English letters as it does in France; moreoever, it is on an average less strictly negative. But the writers who, with Chesterton, bring an indictment against reason, are, in fact, antagonistic, on almost every point, to the radical theses of a Shaw and a Wells. Their influence, strengthened by the philosophical fortune of pragmatism, tends to dispossess the principle of free intellectual inquiry of the control which it had apparently arrogated to itself over both mental and civic life. They may call themselves democrats, and even reformers; but their programme goes to fortify the established order. They may believe themselves independent of religious dogmas; but the effort of their faith harmonizes with the teaching of churches; and a deep-set affinity directs them towards the Roman Catholic idea. They stand in a natural league with the forces of authority round which, before and chiefly since the shock of the war, the instinctive desires for resistance and stability have been gathering.

These forces, in Great Britain, are less bent than in France upon finding a justification for themselves in theory; they are rooted in habits, interests, corporations, government, and this guarantee is to them sufficient. To their still undiminished strength, the number of writers or artists who invest their prestige with logical cogency, with attractiveness or with poetry, bears no adequate proportion. On the whole, English literature and art at the present time are instinct with a spirit of moral independence and social criticism; the free search for new values is with them in the ascendant; and the apostles of traditionalism are neither the more numerous nor the more eminent group.

G. K. Chesterton[1] is the champion of orthodoxy. To this word he has given a more and more substantial meaning; the logic of his thought has led him to the fold of the Roman Catholic Church, which he has joined at the same time in principle, and as a convert. An optimist, a lover of life, he derides vehemently the modern errors which prey upon the frank merry health of the heart: puritanic sourness, pessimistic morbidity, the unrest of minds that have lost, along with faith, their very balance; and most of all, the most serious disease of our time, the reasoning mania of unregulated intelligences. The methods of science and philosophy are arbitrary; their conclusions are distressing only to those fools who have gratuitously bound themselves up with their chimerical endeavour. The perceptions enclosed in the experience of the centuries contain the substantial treasure of reliable things, the things which help one to live; religion is the common background of all those perceptions; and authority, which gathers all minds into one essential belief, is the soul of religion. The necessary submission of the individual will be the foundation of his freedom. Our industrial civilization has reduced mankind to slavery; and the panacea of rational theorists, State socialism, makes the serfdom of every one only worse. Economic harmony, just like the fraternity of hearts, can be revived by an enlightened return to the ideal of the Middle Ages. The eager swarming activity of the old trade associations gave normal and healthy satisfactions both to selfishness and to the group-spirit. That fanciful work, *The Napoleon of Notting Hill,* is not thus without a direct connection with the precise teaching of the apostles of the new "guilds."

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[1] Gilbert Keith Chesterton, born in London in 1874, studied at the Slade School of Art; began as an art critic and collaborated in reviews; published studies on *Browning*, 1903; *Dickens*, 1906; *G. B. Shaw*, 1909; *The Victorian Age in Literature*, 1913; novels: *The Napoleon of Notting Hill*, 1904; *The Man Who Was Thursday*, 1908; *The Ball and the Cross*, 1910; *Manalive*, 1912; works of critical and philosophical discussion: *Heretics*, 1905; *Orthodoxy*, 1908; *What's Wrong with the World?* 1910; short stories: *The Innocence of Father Brown*, 1911, etc.; *Poems*, 1915; and *The Crimes of England*, 1915; *The*

Here, as elsewhere, the dogmatic thought at the bottom is hidden under the most flippant manner. Chesterton's wisdom prides itself on avoiding the paradoxes of reason pushed to an absurd excess; and obeying a sort of compensatory need, it jingles noisily the bells of a paradoxical invention. His literary temperament is that of a humorist, bent upon refreshing a severely traditional doctrine through the constant unexpectedness of the style. A belief in the fruitful novelty of the most ancient truths: such is the motive behind those verbal variations, upon themes which are overgrown to the point of being lost sight of; the movement and the tricks of the style are, as it were, a visible effect of that inner conviction. This assurance it is that justifies the uninterrupted search for piquant modes of expression: the banality of the idea not only demands, but deserves them. The talent of Chesterton has succeeded in instilling new life into many truisms; and the originality of his orthodoxy does not lie exclusively in the humour with which it is presented: common sense, when all is said, is the most precious and the least commonplace vein of thought. But he has not subjected his spontaneous manner to the control of a sufficiently exacting artistic conscience; the quality of his improvisations is very unequal; and although his personality possesses the value of a sign, only few among his writings do not bear the stamp of the ephemeral.

The same general fund of ideas is to be found in the works of H. Belloc,[1] poet, novelist, critic, essayist, controversialist. The unity underlying his very various, and no less unequal literary creations, might be traced to a spirit of audaciousness and adventure, which is ever bidding defiance to cautious ways and routine-loving fears. Routine and timidity are all, in the eyes of H. Belloc, on the side of cool reason, and of those scientific systems of knowledge which are forcing a hopeless monotony upon the world. His aim, and an often success-

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Uses of Diversity, 1920, etc. See J. West, *G. K. Chesterton, a Critical Study,* 1916; P. Braybrooke, *G. K. Chesterton,* 1922; G. Bullett, *The Innocence of G. K. Chesterton,* 1923.

[1] Hilaire Belloc, born in 1870 near Paris, of a French family of Catholics, was brought up in England, studied at Oxford; became naturalized English in 1903; Member of Parliament from 1906 to 1910; published poems: *Verses and Sonnets,* 1895, etc.; travel tales: *The Path to Rome,* 1902, etc.; novels: *Emmanuel Burden,* 1904, etc.; essays: *On Nothing,* 1903, etc.; political studies: *The Servile State,* 1912, etc. See *The Bookman,* No. 45 (1915); study by C. C. Mandell and E. Shanks, 1916.

ful one, is to strike out a gushing freshness and surprise from all the happenings of the wayside; to embroider an unsubstantial matter with the most profuse arabesques; to feel and reveal the beauty of the earth, the unexpectedness of familiar prospects, the wealth of life. The lack of responsibility in a thought which does not revolve round a fixed axis, and does not care to have one, because its centre of gravity is beyond the plane of logic, deprives this mental energy of all lasting influence upon many minds. But H. Belloc's paradoxes are more careful than those of Chesterton; his manner is freer from tricks; while he has not the same vigour, he possesses a more varied and surer charm of expression.

The affinities of intellectual temperaments make it possible to class with those two free-lances of tradition a writer who, without taking a direct share in the conflicts of ideas, allowed the persuasive preferences of his imagination to emanate from his work. Maurice Hewlett[1] lived in the past; his subdued Romanticism, cured of all fever, found a refuge from the present in the nobility and beauty of chivalrous ages; against the realism of a positive century, he set up the refinements of an art which was not afraid of affectation, since literature is essentially the artificial instrument to re-create an unattainable ideal. In his verse, he sang the joys and pains of the peasant, the man upon whom English greatness rested until the baneful reign of machines began. There is no explicit call to action here; the theme and the tone would rather suggest a pessimism like Hardy's were it not that a braced energy, and the will to find spiritual salvation in effort, instil a religious soul into this otherwise detached æstheticism.

The tightening of moral will in a society which the crisis of the decadent age had alarmed, can also be traced in the success of a novelist, E. F. Benson,[2] who knew how to bring talent, wit, sentiment, a fine knowledge of worldly manners, to the task of furthering the desire for order, enforced by the firmer instinct of a generation which was taking its own cure in hand. This return to moral faith is perceptible as well in Edward Thomas,[3] whose prematurely interrupted work shows a delicate intuition, a personal gift of poetic expression.

Lastly, it is no paradox to rank with the defenders of tradition a writer who figured, for a time, as an intrepid mouthpiece of the spirit of criticism: Mrs. Humphry Ward.[4] Brought up under intellectual influences, she wrought the conflict between literal faith and the new exegesis into a story of lasting significance (*Robert Elsmere*). It was already apparent that her temperament was leading her to conservative solutions; but her having outspokenly interpreted certain anxious qualms was set down, not undeservedly, to the boldness of her spirit. The inexperienced, moving vigour of this drama of the conscience lost its edge in the following novels, almost always built on the clash of principles or forces, but in which philosophical breadth is endangered by a gradually narrowing perception. Whether the matter studied is a religious crisis, a political career, a sentimental knot, or poverty, and the palliatives which charity can apply to it, the social aspect of the struggling tendencies is blurred by the atmosphere of an

[1] Maurice Hewlett (1861–1923), advocate and magistrate, published imaginative or historical novels: *The Forest Lovers,* 1898; *The Life and Death of Richard Yea-and-Nay,* 1900; *The Queen's Quair,* etc., 1904; poems: *Helen Redeemed, etc.,* 1913; etc.

[2] Edward Frederick Benson, born in 1867; *Dodo,* 1893; *Dodo the Second,* 1914, etc.

[3] Edward Thomas, born in 1878, killed in action, 1917; published critical studies and poems: *Collected Poems,* 1920.

[4] Mary Arnold (1851–1920), niece of Matthew, born in Tasmania, married Mr. Humphry Ward; after the resounding success of *Robert Elsmere,* 1888, she published *The History of David Grieve,* 1892; *Marcella,* 1894; *Sir George Tressady,* 1895; *Helbeck of Bannisdale,* 1898; *Eleanor,* 1900; *Lady Rose's Daughter,* 1903; *The Marriage of William Ashe,* 1905; *Fenwick's Career,* 1906; *The Case of Richard Meynell,* 1911; *The Coryston Family,* 1913, etc. See her autobiography (*A Writer's Recollections,* 1918); *The Life of Mrs. Humphry Ward,* by J. P. Trevelyan, 1923; the studies by J. S. Walters (*Mrs. Humphry Ward, Her Work and Influence*), 1912; S. L. Gwynn (*Mrs. Humphry Ward:* Writers of the Day), 1917.

essential conventionality. Stripped of their actual rawness, the problems treated lose much of their convincing humanity. The picture of aristocratic circles, however, keeps its genuine value. The psychology in Mrs. Ward's novels has all the merits of painstaking analysis, not those of unerring creation. The style, laborious as it is, speaks to the intelligence, not to the imagination. A generous-minded writer thus enslaves herself, of her own free will, to the respectabilities of every kind, which she looks up to as laws. The very sense of the future vanishes; all the solutions presented tend to maintain the salutary hierarchy of things; nothing remains but the sincere, and not undignified, clinging of instinct to a society from whose system of precedency and rules it derives almost complete satisfaction.[1]

4. **Socialism : Shaw, Wells, etc.**—English socialism was born in the stormy years of the early Victorian period; it subsided during the middle years of prosperity and balance; it awoke into new life before the end of the nineteenth century. Its economic doctrine was moulded into more precise shape by the combined influences of the Marxian system, of Henry George (*Progress and Poverty*, 1880), and of a group of men upon whom the seal of national characteristics is plainly set, the Fabian Society. Thenceforth, an abundant literature of explanatory tracts or polemical treatises develops round the theme of the social problem. A large number of thinkers, theorists and artists give expression to more or less open sympathies for socialism, without making it a main issue in their works. But some gifted writers, following William Morris's example, bind up their intellectual destiny with its cause. The part played by this movement in the growth of their ideas is so important, that they can be studied from no other point of view. However independent their critical judgments may remain, this positive conviction is one of the central beliefs upon which their lives and thoughts are hinged.

Bernard Shaw,[2] like every interesting thinker, is not reducible to simple terms. The set purpose of aggressive clear-sightedness upon which he has chosen to concentrate himself hides many a shade in his inner mood; and at the present day, the unbending of a mind which looks back over a long and fruitful career allows those shades to come out more clearly. His literary figure, however, can be sketched in a few strokes of the brush. His predominant characteristic is a fearless intellectual criticism. This is not original, to speak properly. It brings to a focus the tendencies of an age when the break-up of Victorian balance sets intelligence free as well as feeling; it finds its inspiration in the new audacity with which the diverging forces assert themselves in every direction. Whatever may be Bernard Shaw's indebtedness to Nietzsche, Ibsen, Wagner, Karl Marx—and to the last three, at least, he is, no doubt, largely indebted—he had in England an immediate precursor, whose disciple he confessed himself. The principles of his criticism, and even the objects to which he applies them, are, indeed, very similar to those of Samuel Butler, the author of *Erewhon.* The analogy is deep-laid and striking; and it stretches even further than might be inferred from the differences of the themes and artistic forms.

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[1] Other writers who have figured or who will figure later, from the point of view of their dominant characteristics, under other headings, could naturally be added to these.

[2] George Bernard Shaw, born in 1856 in Dublin, of Protestant middle-class family and English descent, was early conscious of a literary calling; after various occupations, he lived by his pen as a journalist, then dramatist. His novels, *The Irrational Knot, Love among the Artists, Cashel Byron's Profession, An Unsocial Socialist*, written between 1880 and 1886, and published at a later date, had no success. As a socialist he has taken an active part in the Fabian movement, has written several "tracts," notably the manifesto of the group (1884), and *The Impossibilities of Anarchism*, 1891; *Fabianism and the Empire; The Common-Sense of Municipal Trading*, 1904, etc. Art critic, then dramatic critic of the *Saturday Review*, 1895–98, he published *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, 1891; *The Perfect Wagnerite*, 1898; his *Dramatic Opinions and Essays* were collected in 1906. The chronology of his plays is complicated; the interval between the composition and the production has often been long; several have been banned by the censor. Their great success in England dates only from the beginning of the twentieth century. The first comedy, *Widowers' Houses*, was written between 1885 and 1892, and staged in 1893; then came *The Philanderer, Mrs. Warren's Profession, Arms and the Man, Candida, The Man of Destiny, You Never Can Tell* (published under the title of *Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant*, 1898): *The Devil's Disciple, Cæsar and Cleopatra, Captain Brassbound's Conversion* (*Three Plays for Puritans*, 1901); *Man and Superman*, 1903; *John Bull's Other Island; Major Barbara; How He Lied to Her Husband; Press Cuttings; The Doctor's Dilemma; Getting Married; The Shewing up of Blanco Posnet; Misalliance; Fanny's First Play; Androcles and the Lion; Overruled; Pygmalion; Great Catherine*, before 1914. On the declaration of war, he rubbed up against national sentiment by publishing *Common-Sense about the War*. His further contributions to the theatre are: *The Inca of Perusalem; Augustus Does His Bit; Heartbreak House; Back to Methuselah*, 1920, etc. See the studies by G. K. Chesterton, 1910; A. Henderson, 1911; C. Cestre, 1912; A. Hamon, 1913; J. MacCabe, 1914; J. Palmer, 1915; P. P. Howe, 1915; R. E. Burton, 1916; H. Skimpole, 1918; H. C. Duffin (*Quintessence of Bernard Shaw*), 1920.

However, Bernard Shaw has a personal temperament. He possesses to the highest degree inventiveness, wit, humour. He knows admirably how to animate ideas, make them live; and, most of all, how to set them up one against another, and conduct an intellectual debate. He has thus invested the most serious thoughts with the exuberant liveliness of form. He has, before G. K. Chesterton, devoted a very similar method, but of superior vigour, to the furtherance of a directly contrary cause. While Samuel Butler would enclose a corrosive meaning in a restrained and mystifying expression, Shaw has popularized the satire of all values, by throwing upon it the light of plain irresistible comedy. Such was the need of his individual genius; such, again, was the optics of the medium—the drama—which he chose for his own. The boldest outbreaks of intelligence had always, in England, found acceptance through a pretended lightness of tone. The author of *Hudibras* said the most subversive things comically; Swift's *Gulliver* clothed his cruel intentions with mockery. When selecting comedy as his instrument, Bernard Shaw was following that tradition, and obeying a just instinct. Laughter relieves the strain of a contrast too forcibly felt between human conventions, and facts; it is to the writer the most natural alleviating outlet; to the spectator or the reader, it is the most pleasant and the easiest alternative to what would be the bitterness of a deliberate adhesion. Laughter allows one to tolerate irreverence without condoning it; and while tolerating it, to be somewhat infected by it. Therefore Bernard Shaw was an entertainer, but with no loss to his dignity. He ascended the stage, not booth boards. His manner is no grimace, but the practice of a mental hygiene. It is also an efficient practical policy. To charge him with gratuitous and systematic paradox, or self-advertisement—as is still too often done—is decidedly unjust; his thought is coherent and serious; he fights not for himself, but for his ideas. Samuel Butler had been misunderstood or ignored; he set himself to win the audience of the general public, and won it.

As compared with his master, he has still a further originality than the more or less clever staging of a doctrine common to both. When confronted with the economic structure of society, Butler's pitiless criticism had abdicated. Even here Bernard Shaw is no creator; he has read Karl Marx and Henry George. But he brings a courageous clear mind to the study of social problems; and for the first time in Great Britain, he fits in their proposed solution with a general rationalist criticism. William Morris's initiative had had a more limited scope, because his intellectual outlook was not so broad; his socialism had not been embodied in a whole system of philosophical opinions, deduced from the sole search for truth. Bernard Shaw has thus added a province, and not the least extensive, to the domain in which an Englishman led by a sincerely free mind may find himself in a conflict with the established order of ideas or facts.

Bernard Shaw's socialism has undergone a change. Dogmatic at first, and leaning to radical solutions, it was mitigated, in his early manhood, under the influence of a realism more keenly aware of facts; it has gradually drifted away from Marxian orthodoxy, and has even ceased to harmonize with the average thought of the Fabian group. The various instincts of his nature have successively expressed themselves through it; his strongly marked individualism has imbued it with anarchist tendencies, the connection of which with the firm organization of collectivism has not always been plainly visible. His fundamental lack of respect has broken out in sallies and gibes aimed at the mediocrity or weakness, from which neither the men nor the ideas of a movement that had his allegiance were free. But his mind has not recanted the indictment which it had drawn up against what is to him economic disorder, and the unjust distribution of goods. His deepest honesty is bound up with it. With all the strength of his intellectual faith, on the contrary, he still accepts the principle and the hope of a rational reorganization of society.

His other tenets agree well enough with the resolution implied in this attitude; and also with the faculty of zeal and enthusiasm—were it even an abstract enthusiasm—but for which those passions of the mind cannot be lasting. Socialism may have won converts by its arguments; but no one ever remained a socialist for motives of pure theory. Bernard Shaw's youth was touched with the fire of Shelley-worship. The negative aspect of his ideas, however, is the more prominent. A pugnacious writer, he has chiefly been an iconoclast. The motive-power which impels him is his keen realization of the unconsciousness in which the official, normal thought of his time is still living. The strenuous criticism of thinkers has probed under the very foundations of Victorian orthodoxy; and the self-satisfaction in which that age dwelt, secure as it was in its opinions, its institutions, its ethics, suddenly assumes, under the acid test of intelligence, the character of an essential laziness and cowardice.

As Samuel Butler had done, Shaw tears off veils, and lays bare the half-voluntary illusions of complacently blind souls. Taking his stand on his property rights, an honest man may be directly responsible for a social sore (*Widowers' Houses*). In a régime of economic laissez-faire, a procuress is just a person in trade (*Mrs. Warren's Profession*). Military heroism is an invention of the civilians (*Arms and the Man*). A worthy clergyman, conscious of his philanthropy, eloquence, and idealism, may be at the same time in the clear-sighted eyes of his wife a harmless and defenceless man of words (*Candida*). The moral authority of parents is an antiquated fiction (*You Never Can Tell*). The sentimental convention of passiveness in feminine manners hides the pursuit of that prey, the husband, by the girl, that hunter (*Man and Superman*). John Bull boasts of his practicality; but he is just a green sentimentalist when confronted with the Irishman (*John Bull's Other Island*). In a society based on money, it is mere hypocrisy not to confess that poverty is an epitome of all vices (*Major Barbara*). On the strength of his professional duty, a physician may be guilty of actual crimes (*The Doctor's Dilemma*). Marriage no longer corresponds either to a fact, or to an ideal (*Getting Married*). And so on. Thus the family, property, religion, science, and all the virtues from which society derives the comforting assurance of its moral worth, are vitiated by an inner lie.

The counterpart of all this is not far to seek. Since all social evils are caused by the lack of intellectual courage, the cure in every case must be sought in the logic of a courageous thought. Bernard Shaw's logic obeys the dictates of his own nature; and here it is that the particular shades of his temperament reveal themselves. His reason leads him to profess a socialism tempered with anarchy; to preach an ethics of ascetic simplicity; to bring love, the family, and the future of the species, under the disciplinary law of a common sense improved with "eugenics"; to turn the "superman" into a biological and near reality. But it leads him even further: to confute Darwin by means of Lamarck, as Samuel Butler had done; to set up vitalism against materialism; to discover at the core of the universe a "Life-Force" which is at first that of Schopenhauer, but tends to become that of Bergson; to trace a current of Divine will in the apparently fatal flood of events. . . . A proclaimed enemy of sentimentalism, he still thus allows revealing emotions to act and speak within some regions of his own being; he has his intuitive moments. The stamp of the Bible on his childhood and education has never, in fact, been effaced from the mind of Bernard Shaw. One of his last works (*Back to Methuselah*) seems to open the religious phase in which H. G. Wells had preceded him.

Those theses, whether positive or negative, are exactly fit to stir out of its apathy the wider English public, little inclined as a rule to intellectual criticism. But they were diffused, about the end of the nineteenth century, in the very atmosphere of European thought. The international success of Bernard Shaw's drama is not due to the novelty or to the intrinsic value of his philosophy. Halfway from the abstract to the concrete, there are intermediary stages: the sensible aspects of those relations that the mind establishes, between the terms which pure analysis has brought out. Bernard Shaw perceives these relations as human and social facts. Therefore his imagination is that of the novelist or the playwright; and as he is much less gifted for patient studies of surroundings and characters, than for the vivacious, clashing, and striking expression of ideas, his talent has found itself in a special variety of comedy, in which discussion, the argument between animated and personified opinions, holds first place.

This literary form to-day answers one of the permanent tastes of the cultivated public; but it demands, if it is to be at all dramatic, that the warring principles shall be blended with the instincts of living personalities. Borrowing from Ibsen the general outline of his dramas of ideas, Bernard Shaw has not often succeeded, like him, in creating such conflicts of tendencies as would set up one against another human being, roused by the elementary passions of their natures. There lies the most serious flaw of his drama. The larger number of his personages are instinct only with the life of intelligence, and are but the mouthpieces of the author. Many of his plays degenerate into endless dialogue, in which the brilliancy of the verve cannot hide the artificiality of the situation. Profound dramatic life is most often lacking in his work. The reason is that emotion, the mainspring of interest, is almost constantly wanting. Bernard Shaw's characters bear the mark of the conscious will which has given them birth; few among them stir us with human sympathy. The oppositions that make them stand one against another, or the attractions that unite them, are very rarely sources of pathos. Their very feelings, when brought into play, seem dry and merely cerebral. Few are the moments when the fictitious beings who move before us are suddenly lighted up with a mysterious poignant beauty; when their lips utter words that seem to come from a depth which analysis cannot probe. *Candida* perhaps has most of those transitory gleams; and this play, the most Ibsen-like and the least plainly intelligible Bernard Shaw has written, might be his dramatic masterpiece.

On the other hand, those plays fully possess the animation which can rise from the incessant stimulation of intelligence. Bernard Shaw displays all the resources of an original, though limited art, in bringing the characters, or rather the symbols, that confront one another, to join issue; in giving an edge to the expressions of their conflicts, and in striking out flashing formulæ from their collisions. Always substituting himself for them more or less, when the time comes, the author addresses us; and then it is that there are unrolled before us in brilliant procession the "paradoxes" whose effect of surprise, either piquant or revolting or revealing, is the essential element in the scenic life of those comedies. The mode of their rise is still the same: divesting a fragment of reality of its crusted conventions or habits, Bernard Shaw suddenly brings to light the new, unexpected, shocking sight of what lay beneath; a vivid contrast is thus created between this apparition, or the very words with which it is expressed, and, on the other hand, the traditional image or description; the latter, which keeps at least a latent life in our minds, forces an instantaneous comparison upon us, producing a violent mental revulsion, which contains an implicit, and so a humorous element. It would be an exaggeration to state, as Bernard Shaw has done, that his vision is abnormal only because it is true. It happens at times that by reversing the usual order of the factors, he throws light upon, not the fecundity of his initiative, but the wisdom of common sense, which has managed to register the most essential aspects of things. On the whole, however, he usefully renews and refreshes our notion of life and the world. Even when he irritates without convincing us, he makes our attachment to our own opinions better justified. He has been one of the most active leavening influences in the moral transformation of contemporary England.

Such is that drama, with which, no doubt, the boldness of a free mind has more to do than mere paradox, but which is itself certainly paradoxical. Those plays made up of mere dialogue are often fatiguing; they are rarely tedious; they have a particular life of their own. The justification of the personages most often consists in the part they play and the philosophy they embody; but many of them valiantly bear such a burden, and make themselves acceptable to our amused curiosity, if not to our intuition of what is possible, through the saving grace of their characteristic significance. Humour, and the gift of telling words, and the profound sense of the diversity of human opinions, are the salt which keeps this fragile literary kind fresh and living. The action, which Ibsen carefully built out of the resources of his powerful dramatic technique, is here simplified, wholly artificial, and sometimes non-existent. Such plays are as fit to be read as to be staged, and perhaps fitter. The author is aware of it; his stage directions have grown to unusual, to enormous lengths; substantial prefaces, more than once, have undertaken to point out the meaning of the play, and thus made the play almost superfluous. There would hardly, in fact, be left anything that might justly be called dramatic, were it not that Bernard Shaw possesses a gift of imaginative invention, and an almost poetical fancy, which through symbolism lead one back to romantic comedy and the Elizabethan drama. Many of his plays, in fact, have been, and still are, very successful on the stage; their success is their justification. After an initial period, in which his manner was, no doubt, too austere, and he exacted too heavy an effort from his audience, he has known how to spare their nerves, and temper his severe lessons with seductive displays of brilliancy, or with farcical admixtures.

As a playwright, he has passed the meridian of his career; but the development of his mind may still have surprises in store. Adapting Ibsen's problem-play, and Butler's thought, to his temperament of an intellectual stimulator, he has produced a strong and lasting work, and aroused the English stage, more efficiently than any other has done, from its century-old torpor.

So vast is the work of H. G. Wells,[1] that its various parts must be classified.

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[1] Herbert George Wells, born in 1868 at Bromley, Kent, came of a very modest middle-class family; was employed in a draper's stores, then as a pupil teacher in a school, until he became a student at a college of science where he followed the lectures of Huxley. Taking the University of London degree, he gave lessons, wrote a handbook of biology, etc.; collaborated in reviews; his short stories on scientific subjects attracted attention, while his novels have made him one of the most widely read among contemporary writers. To his first style belong such works as: *The Time Machine*, 1895; *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, 1896; *The Invisible Man*, 1897; *The War of the Worlds*, 1898; *When the Sleeper Wakes*, 1899; *The First Men in the Moon*, 1901; *The Food of the Gods*, 1904; *In the Days of the Comet*, 1906; *The War in the Air*, 1908 (published in various forms). A socialist, he originally belonged to the Fabian group, but broke away from it; he wrote for it a tract, *This Misery of Boots*, 1907; as well as works of propaganda: *Socialism and Marriage*; *New Worlds for Old*, 1908. At the same time he collected his studies in imaginative sociology: *Anticipations, etc.*, 1901; *Mankind in the Making*, 1903; *A Modern Utopia*, 1905; *The Future in America*, 1906; *An Englishman Looks at the World*, 1914. After some hesitation he has given the central place in his novels to social problems: *The Wheels*

He has written short stories and tales founded on the particular species of the marvellous which modern science can suggest. From biology and applied mechanics, he passed on to the problems of the future of man; a socialist and sociologist, he has lived for a quarter of a century in a daily intercourse of the mind with the efforts, the disappointments, the hopes, of the search for a better life extended to all. This energy of social reflection is the soul of his novels, in which the critical analysis of what is mingles with the study of what should or might be; in which a passionate feeling of the collective drama that man is enacting on the earth, quickened by personal motives, stimulates and guides his imagination. The novel thus becomes a confession of evil in all its forms, and an ample discussion of its remedies; it develops at the same time towards international politics, as the solidarity of peoples and the supremacy of public opinion are already adumbrating them; and towards religious philosophy, the free examination of supreme questions and last issues. Already on the eve of the war, and chiefly during and after it, the thought of H. G. Wells has taken a definite bent in this direction. He figures at the present day as a spiritual guide of suffering humanity, the adviser of nations blinded by their hostilities, of individuals whom their selfishness is making unconscious. While science, its facts, its methods, have not vanished from the background of his mind, he has taken his stand with Carlyle and Ruskin in the exercise of a half-mystical apostolate.

But if he takes up that tradition again, he modifies it very deeply. His intellectual formation belonged to a new type—or one, at least, whose influence had hardly yet been felt in literature. The predominant spirit of the surroundings has not, through the subtle working of education and atmosphere, attenuated the vigour of his democratic instincts; moreover, he has received from science his mental habits, his master intuitions, and classical culture has had no chance to shape his robust originality according to the traditional ideal of a resigned humanism. Having reached the life of art through those independent ways, H. G. Wells possessed a revolutionary force in his unadulterated instincts. The writers who came like him from the lower-middle rank—as, for instance, Dickens—had accepted the superiority of the social system outside which they had been born; they had desired to enter it, were it only in order to broaden it, and introduce with them into it a more generous charity. H. G. Wells, on the contrary, sees and judges from the outside the hierarchy of classes, and all the conventions upon which it is based; he refuses to yield to the lure of a naturalization in which a subjection is implied. So, nothing mitigates the cruel clear-sightedness of his eyes. The fictitious values still acknowledged by Carlyle or Ruskin—for example, the old notion of the "gentleman"—are to him, like all others, to be revised. Further, he brings to bear on moral questions, and on the problem of the order of which society is susceptible, the realism of a man used to the analysis of causes, full of the sense of the complexity inherent to vital

of Chance, 1896; *Love and Mr. Lewisham*, 1900; *Kipps*, 1905; *Tono-Bungay*, *Ann Veronica*, 1909; *The History of Mr. Polly*, 1910; *The New Machiavelli*, 1911; *Marriage*, 1912; *The Passionate Friends*, 1913; *The World Set Free*, *The Wife of Sir Isaac Harman*, 1914; *Bealby*, *The Research Magnificent*, 1915. His studies in general philosophy are to be found in *First and Last Things*, 1908 (revised edition, 1917); and under the influence of the war he treated social and religious problems in *Mr. Britling Sees It Through*, 1916; *God the Invisible King*, *The Soul of a Bishop*, 1917; *Joan and Peter*, 1918; *The Undying Fire*, 1919; while the reorganization of the world, as demanded by the war, has inspired *The War That Will End War*, 1914; *What Is Coming?* 1916; *The Elements of Reconstruction*, 1916; *War and the Future*, 1917; *In the Fourth Year*, 1918; *The Outline of History*, 1920; *The Salvaging of Civilization*, 1921, etc. See studies by Chevrillon (*Nouv. études anglaises*), 1910; J. D. Beresford (*H. G. Wells:* Writers of the Day), 1915; V. W. Brook (*The World of H. G. Wells*), 1915; E. E. Slosson (*Six Major Prophets*), 1917; Ed. Guyot (*H. G. Wells*), 1921; R. T. Hopkins (*H. G. Wells, Personality, Character, etc.*), 1922; G. Connes (*La Pensée de H. G. Wells*), 1926.

reactions, but also of the power which the experimenter wields over them. In this way a technical angle of vision, the imaginative bents which a biologist will derive from the study of tissues, functions and organs, are at the root of the remarkable faculty of divination which has made H. G. Wells a precursor or an inventor on points scattered over the whole field of life. He has an intuitive feeling of the ways through which we can act according to the simpler will of brute matter, or the more entangled demands of organized bodies.

Even leaving out many temperamental shades, such is the source of the mental difference between Wells and Shaw. They meet in a plane of equally audacious criticism; in many respects, the general outlines of their solutions coincide; the common starting-point of both is Fabian socialism; originally, to both of them, intelligence is the single criterion of truth, of justice. But Bernard Shaw's education was more normal; he is more thoroughly submissive to the discipline of mathematical reason; he sees problems from the point of view of logic. Wells is under the ascendancy of concrete perception; not that which supports the elementary and passive kind of empiricism, but that of a superior empiricism, which will proceed to investigations, and take initiatives in the presence of facts. So there is in Wells's thought more elasticity, a greater power of self-renovation; it has remained more broadly in touch with reality. He is thus led to test in himself the very instruments of knowledge; to establish modest conclusions upon an attentive and shrewd psychological analysis; and thus it is that his philosophical confession, *First and Last Things,* breathes a rationalism so curiously tempered by pragmatist avowals. His perception of the concrete is doubtlessly also the cause of the very marked intellectual evolution which has made him more and more keenly alive to the incalculable elements in human life—passions, desires, impulses; to the gleams of beauty, to the secret and powerful activities of idealism; and which has made him a prophet.

The very cause, however, which broadens Wells's thought and makes it more supple, must be acknowledged to narrow its scope in some respects. This thought feeds on experience; but experience is individual; generalization, and the sense of broader issues, should be constantly at work, in order to counteract its essential relativity. It is obvious that Wells has not always succeeded in escaping this danger. His feeling of all problems is stimulated by a quivering personality; but it is also agitated, disturbed, on occasion warped by it. His critical or constructive endeavour will be strictly controlled at times by his grievances or his passions, not in so far as they are human, but in so far as they are accidental.

Impulsive as it is, and diversified by an inner movement which has not yet allowed it to find a resting-place, his thought is none the less one of the most substantial in contemporary Europe; it is the centre of his work, and imparts to it a radiating virtue of fecundity. Through it, more efficiently than through any other, the wider Anglo-Saxon public has been initiated in the intense moral disturbance of an unsettled age. It is to it that the writer and the artist mostly owe their appeal and their value.

Bernard Shaw's satirical study of English society was like the demonstration of a series of theses, which, according to a simple and almost mechanical device, reversed the usual order of certain terms. That of Wells rather reminds one of an anatomical dissection; it reveals to us the depth and inner condition of tissues. This is why it is so instructive; it does not separate, but on the contrary, unites facts and souls, the material and the moral elements of the social organization. It aims at tracing their concatenation, from the dim region where economic forces, silent and all-powerful traditions, implicit instincts, are interwoven in the very woof of the established order, to the superior plane where in full light are displayed the public relationships of the classes, official feelings, political ideas and formulæ. What a Balzac and a Zola had done in France, Wells does again in England, with less genius than one or the other, a grasp of the psychology of individuals less strong and safe than that of the first, an intuition of group psychology less vigorous than that of the second, but with a sociological sense more precise than that of either. Such a study as that which we find in *Tono-Bungay* of the structure of English society, with its two poles, the agricultural, hierarchical and superannuated civilization of the "Bladesover system," and on the other hand the swarming world of commerce, advertising and money, is a broad general picture of rare power, in which the lights are distributed by the artist with an accuracy that a scientist might envy.

The remedy for a universal disorder of which he has given two more striking sketches, taken from the life at a few years' interval, in *The New Machiavelli* and *Joan and Peter,* has been proposed by H. G. Wells most unambiguously. It is organizing socialism, in a form free, but less mixed than that of Bernard Shaw (*New Worlds for Old,* etc.). But it is most often in connection with particular problems, and from a special point of view, that social anarchy is considered. A large part of his work as a novelist deals with the conflict between irresponsible passion, on the one hand, and, on the other, the necessity for some regulation of love, or the summary decrees of morality and of law; an already well-worn subject, which Wells treats with a frankness that oversteps the bounds of Victorian respectability, but without all the delicacy of touch which such an analysis would require. *Ann Veronica* studies the emancipated girl, confronted with freedom and its snares, and the choice of a companion. *The New Machiavelli* portrays the struggle between political ambition and love, on the background of worldly pharisaism. *Marriage, The Passionate Friends,* play variations on the same theme. Here, Wells does not reach a positive conclusion; he shows the facts as they are, difficult and painful, and sees no infallible solution. While Bernard Shaw demanded an unlimited extension of the facilities for divorce, he sets a very definite limit, in the interests of the race, to the fragility of unions.

The movement of his thought has ceaselessly progressed towards a more idealistic notion of the conditions of collective health. The Fabian in Wells has grown disenchanted as to a programme which he now deems bureaucratic, and has turned to a more inward theory of social reform. The actuality of a people's civilization, at a given time, is in its ideas and manners; to reconstruct a nation is to re-create the spirit of its public life. Already *Anticipations, Mankind in the Making,* had studied the development of man in its functional relation to a single predominant factor, science. Organized knowledge still remains in the eyes of Wells the great hope of mankind; the world, he believes, will assume a different aspect, as soon as the elementary connection between causes and effects in nature and life is more accurately perceived by all. The future of humanity, and more particularly that of Great Britain, is bound up with the problem of education. *Joan and Peter* grapples with the subject; and forcibly, in a raw light, under a simplified but not misleading perspective, points out the routine-loving empiricism of the present, and what might be substituted for it.

But science and ideas are neither the only motive-powers of the soul, nor the most powerful. Already before the war there were seen in Wells signs of an increasing attention to the claims of feeling—from love and passion, which are the making and undoing of individual destinies, through those moving intuitions which the philosopher acknowledged (*First and Last Things*), those sudden apparitions of beauty, those flashes of a light which the artist pronounced to be mysterious and unearthly, even to religious emotions properly so called. The shock of the war has caused that budding mysticism to bloom. Socialism no longer stands in the foreground of Wells's thought. His political theses are dominated by the ardour and anguish of a high certitude, that of human unity in the making. This faith interprets and unifies the history of the world (*The Outline of History*) ; it opens the way to salvation for a Europe exhausted with violence, destruction and fear (*The Salvaging of Civilizattion*). Internationalism has become the necessary form of Wells's intelligence and vision. And from the earth that moans in carrying her load of tears through the skies, from the race of men in which the fires of reason, of duty, of love burn in spite of all, a common aspiration meanwhile rises, a thrill of nature which another thrill answers in the abysm of space. The Divine exists; it is perceptible, and plain to our consciousness; it is aware of our call; it is not infinite, it is not almighty, but it tends towards a more complete personality, to the realization of which all beings co-operate. Reconciled mankind will be one of the centres in which will burn with increased energy that deathless flame with which it is already glowing; a flame whose cosmic radiance, meanwhile, lights, attracts and guides it (*Mr. Britling Sees It Through, The Undying Fire,* etc.).

Theology is a dangerous subject. Unbelievers have reproached Wells with having touched it; believers, with touching it otherwise than they themselves did. The fact is that his thought is somewhat interfering. Possessed as it is by an impatience to understand and to express itself, it knows no limits to its ambition, no check upon its daring attempts. But a sincere and truly religious intellectual humility is at the core of this seeming presumption. Wells's mysticism gives the finishing touch to his personality; and such an inspiration, while dangerous to artistic balance, has not always been harmful to an already over-excitable artist. *The Undying Fire* has a concentration, a definiteness of outline which he had but rarely reached.

The writer, indeed, is very unequal. The fanciful tales of the first period are now considered by the author himself as unpretending efforts. They possess, however, merits of their own. Written in a simple and straightforward manner, with a natural sense of style, they serve their purpose very well. They illustrate also the spontaneous movements of an imagination which takes a curious pleasure in modifying one term, beyond the range of its normal or possible value, in the formulæ of biology and mechanics, with a view to studying its reaction upon the whole system; just as the philosopher at a later date will dream of a human order in which the progress of science will transform the equation of happiness. The works of pure sociology are among the most solid of his writings; in them the taking interest of the matter is set off by a sober animation, or an emotion that emphasizes the thought without dimming its clearness. When we come to the novels, we find more ambitious artistic aims; higher effects indeed appear, as well as more visible failings.

Among such works *Kipps* and *Tono-Bungay* are probably the best. These books are instinct with a single central impulse which carries them to their conclusions; the action in them, without being condensed beyond the probabilities of life, has a substantial unity. They have been conceived and realized by an intellectual ardour and by a verve not unfit to be matched. In the other novels, the energy is fitful; there seem to occur breaks in the continuity of the subject, of the plan, or of the writer's conviction; the development is liable to diffuseness and uncertainty. Through the whole of Wells's work, the value of the characters varies exceedingly, according to the fund of personal observation and subjective experience which enters into their substance; the category of beings he has best depicted is that which he had known in his childhood and youth, more or less directly about him; the obscure soul of a Kipps, the restless soul of a Ponderevo, contrasted with the magnificent assurance of his uncle; dyspeptic Mr. Polly, ambitious Remington, are of that order. Such striking figures are numerous enough to testify to a remarkable creative power, within its limits. The women and the girls are of inferior quality, and especially so whenever the psychology endeavours to be fine, or to draw an intense image of love. The passions that live here are those of imagination and the head, not those of the heart. The picture of surroundings, powerful in the analysis of social interrelations, is valuable when it deals with masses, and sketches a whole civilization, an historical moment, painted with a broad touch of the brush. When it is a question of describing more precise social circles, the author shows a familiar acquaintance only with the middle and lower-middle classes; in this field, indeed, his canvases are full, racy, and we feel that they are like. Here again, the humour is natural, easy, and genial enough, though not of a very rare quality.

The calm and quietly evocative style of the early books has grown more feverish; it is now loaded with ardour, intentions, and a kind of impressionism which reveals a richer vision, a more extensive command of language, the anguish of the inexpressible, and also the frequent interruption of the current of attention. The concrete and varied colouring of many episodes in the realistic novels (*Kipps, Tono-Bungay,* etc.) is too often missing at a later date, being replaced by a heated abstraction which is neither quite argument nor quite poetry. Still, the central vigour of the thought, and the sincerity of an exaltation which unceasingly rises with eager broken flights, impart a saving virtue to this style, in spite of an excessive, almost morbid strain, and the cinema-like blinking manner of *Mr. Britling* and most of the recent novels; a virtue of impelling force, a glow of intellectual emotion, an imperfect and suffering beauty, like the very genius of a writer who ever struggles with irritating fatalities of temper, condoned by an ultimate nobility of aim.

With Wells, socialism comes into wide contact with life; it tends to comprehend it all, and for this very reason loses sight of the simplicity of formulæ. An attractive personality more fully represents this realization of an ideal, in so far as it is open to an individual to practise it. Edward Carpenter[1] has felt influences: that of Ruskin, that of Whitman, that of Hindu mysticism; but the central decisions of his personality are his own. A poet, an æsthetician, a moralist, a psychologist, he has displayed in several fields an original talent, too exclusively occupied with a gospel of universal brotherhood to give to expression the rigorous care without which there can be no perfection; inspired, however, and able to invest a high enthusiasm with taking images and rhythms. His philosophy, all looking out towards the future, has examined the most delicate problems of spiritual civilization with intuitive healthy audacity. His seduction as a literary figure lies in his generous humanity, the harbinger of new times, in which, through his heart and his thought, he already lives.

To be consulted: C. Cestre, *Bernard Shaw,* 1912; F. W. Chandler, *Aspects of Modern Drama,* 1916; Abel Chevalley, *Le Roman anglais de notre temps,* 1921; A. Chevrillon, *Trois études de littérature anglaise,* 1921; G. Connes, *La Pensée de H. G. Wells,* 1926; J. W. Cunliffe, *English Literature during the Last Half-Century,* 1920; E. Guyot, *Le Socialisme et l'évolution de l'Angleterre contemporaine,* 1913; idem, *H. G. Wells,* 1920; A. Henderson, *European Dramatists,* 1913; J. M. Manly and E. Rickert, *Contemporary British Literature,* 1922; W. L. Phelps, *The Advance of the English Novel,* 1916; idem, *Essays on Modern Dramatists,* 1921; F. Roz, *Le Roman anglais contemporain,* 1912; G. N. Shuster, *The Catholic Spirit in Modern English Literature,* 1922; H. Williams, *Modern English Writers,* 1920.

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[1] Edward Carpenter, born in 1844, studied at Cambridge, renounced a Church career, taught science, came into contact with the working-classes, adopted socialism, became a manual worker, and finally an agriculturist, at the same time as he wrote poems: *Narcissus, etc.,* 1873; *Towards Democracy* (four parts), 1883–1902; *Chants of Labour,* 1888; a drama, *Moses,* 1875; æsthetic and religious studies: *The Religious Influence of Art,* 1869; *Angel's Wings, etc.,* 1898; *The Art of Creation, etc.,* 1904; *Pagan and Christian Creeds, etc.,* 1920; treatises in social and moral psychology: *England's Ideal, etc.,* 1887; *Civilization, Its Cause and Cure,* 1889; *Love's Coming of Age,* etc., 1896; *The Intermediate Sex,* etc., 1908; *The Healing of Nations,* etc., 1915; an autobiography: *My Days and Dreams,* 1916. See studies by Crosby, 1905; Lewis, 1915; A. H. M. Sime, 1916; T. Swan, 1922.

CHAPTER V

CONTEMPORARY TENDENCIES

1. **Literary Individualism.**—It is a commonplace remark that, as it draws nearer to the present, the precise study of a given literature meets with increasing difficulties. Perspective is lacking; works fit to last cannot be distinguished yet from ephemeral successes; the action of time has not, through the accumulated effect of successive judgments, brought out that average standard of appreciation which assigns to writers and books, within a narrow margin, their proper categories and their just ranks. The figure of each author has not revealed all its aspects; the characteristic features have not stood out in full relief.

More difficult still than the valuation of merits is the ordering of groups. An inner principle of classification can no longer be put into practice. The personality of each writer remains closed up; his own reserve, and a scruple of delicacy in his readers, prevent the latter from invading those recesses by force. The implicit confessions to be found in books need being explained and completed. Few are the authors who enlighten us as to themselves; and what they say is not, as a rule, what we should most like to know. The biographer and the critic will enjoy their full freedom, and be able to use all their methods of investigation, only when the man they deal with is no longer. We know less of the living than of the dead.

It is thus impossible to group the English writers of the present time according to their psychological affinities. The division into literary kinds is the only practicable order. A rapid survey will be here attempted of the novel, the drama, and poetry.

Never were these categories more external. Never did the personality of each writer count for more, as compared with the general form of his expression. And never did temperaments more forcibly refuse to comply with a common style, one method, one programme. It has often been noticed that the era of literary doctrines and schools seems to be over. The twentieth century in Great Britain bears the same parcelled-out aspect as in France. In spite of the effort towards unity which was represented by the doctrines of action, the variety of tendencies, on the eve of the war, was unlimited. The future will tell whether the new period, which English literature may be now entering, is to witness a reappearance of simple lines and of an accepted discipline; and whether the predominantly intellectual age which seems to be called for by the law of moral rhythm, is to put an end by means of a strong synthesis to a phase of diverging instincts.

In order that this should be the case, it would be necessary that the moral and social changes caused by the war should deeply renovate the inner sources of art and thought. For the literary individualism of the present day is no superficial fact; it springs from a development of long standing; it is brought about by the very advance of psychological complexity, and by the subconscious persistence of the past in the present.

The wiser course is to admit that Nature does not nowadays produce a larger number of original temperaments; but each one's originality knows better how to show to advantage; it knows better how to define itself. Every mind finds the elements of such a definition ready made. It possesses the necessary means of comparison in its inner treasure of latent memories. The number and the diversity of the tendencies which each individual carries in himself, because of psychological heredity, now broaden the margin of variation in which personal differences can find place, and favour the clear perception of these differences. For the memory of the race has not only kept records of the past phases of development; it has preserved some trace, as well, of the æsthetic judgments which respectively answered to each of those phases; it dimly revives, in every consciousness, the series of the earlier preferences of taste. Here is felt the influence of culture, the more developed and widely diffused as a people's civilization is further advanced. Education turns into a clear notion the obscure intuition, previously owned by each individual being, of the main artistic types that have been successively realized, and of the corresponding attitudes of sensibility. Thus it is that modern writers will reach the age of literary creation with a definite idea both of what they want to create, and of the particular place of their temperaments in the whole range of possibilities; with a critical vocabulary and a programme within reach. The history of the national letters and of other literatures has familiarized them from an early age with the principal species of æsthetic doctrines. It has become so easy and so natural a thing to express one's own originality to one's self, and to draw up a programme, that all beginners are, or want to be, original; all are leaders of some school or other; the result is that there is no longer any real school. What used to be the connecting bond and the strength of groups—the unconsciousness of one's self and of a long past, the ignoring of the numberless diversities which psychological evolution has deposited in souls—now does not exist; so that minds deprived of that antiquated ignorance can no longer unite, or believe that they unite, in the simple worship of the same forms of beauty.

Individualism in literature is thus a truth; it is in harmony with inner reality. But while it is fruitful in a way, as everything sincere is, it does not necessarily bespeak an over-abundance of original faculties. To all appearances, on the contrary, genuine originality has to-day become more difficult. So numerous are now the traces which the previous stages of moral development, and especially the literary phases, have left in the memory of the group, and consequently in the individual also, that the complexity of instincts begins to make it almost impossible for a writer to feel he is tapping untouched resources, which is equivalent to saying that it is almost impossible for him to possess them. Each reaction no longer revives the full joy of novelty; it rather awakes the impression of a thing seen before. The periods of the inner rhythm henceforth interpenetrate and contain one another; they cannot succeed in forgetting one another. The point of saturation seems reached. The attempts of artistic sensibility to create something new carry within themselves the dim but perceptible memory of similar efforts already attempted; and they are intuitively aware that the visible difference between the endeavour of the day before yesterday and that of to-day, is precisely due to the persistent influence of that very mood of yesterday, from which consciousness is trying to escape. Thenceforward the way is hardly open to a renewing of literary inspiration through those vast movements of the soul, to which the minds of a whole generation rally with the enthusiasm and the pleasure of self-discovery. Programmes then, if wide, are necessarily commonplace; and if precise, must include so many particular features, that they become exaggeratedly individual in character.

This is the case, at least, in what concerns the stable, influential, and most cultivated classes of society. As for those whose culture is still incomplete, they show more elasticity. The education of taste has a double effect: on the one hand, it makes the exercise of inborn faculties more easy; it develops talents, strengthens and improves their expression; it thus adds materially to their number. On the other hand, by stimulating in each mind the consciousness of itself, and chiefly the knowledge of the national past, it intensifies the working of elementary psychological memory, and tends to make the eager innovating initiatives of genius more rare. The contemporary period, during which, in England, as elsewhere, education has become widely diffused, witnesses the birth of literary talents in greater abundance than ever before. The universities have given rise to a whole swarm of poets. Creative gifts, however, are not more frequent; and they seem to reveal themselves preferably outside the circles most permeated with scholarly culture. Some independence, a certain irregularity, even gaps, in the formation of a mind and the instruction of its taste, seem to foster the growth in it of virgin instincts, and of a superior originality. There had always been erratic geniuses; but this remark would imply that their number was on the increase. In fact, the most generally known English writers of the present day—except Galsworthy—would confirm these views. Neither Hardy, nor Kipling, nor Wells, nor Conrad, nor Bennett, nor Shaw, has felt, in the proper sense, the influence of the universities.

It thus would seem as if the literary individualism of the present time were deeply connected with the multiplicity of talents, and with the divorce between normal culture and genius; while the causes of these two facts might be found in the growing moral senescence which is made inevitable by a prolonged psychological evolution. On the threshold of an era which endeavours to be new, it would thus be necessary to regard a stagnation, brought about by the wearing out of the inner spring which produces renewals, as a consequence difficult to escape; and one would have to expect a genuine renewing only from a substantial addition of fresh energy, the origin of which might be either in vast moral and social changes, or in the broadening of consciousness to the full extent of the Empire or of all mankind. But the very problem of spiritual nationalities, and of their adaptation to a different civilization, is thus raised. English literature, in spite of some symptoms, does not yet seem to have solved it—neither has it been solved by any other.

2. **The Novel.**—The novel remains in England an instrument of expression of unlimited elasticity. It is chosen by the most diverse temperaments; and serves to explain all theses, to register the most varied experiences. It constitutes by itself two-thirds of original literary production.

Among the contemporary novelists, some figures stand out prominently: those of writers who reached their full reputation only when the nineteenth century was over, but who belong to a pre-war generation. Others, younger and according to appearances less considerable, still have an unknown quantity in themselves; they represent the future in the making.

Joseph Conrad[1] is the most eminent symptom of what the new literary cosmopolitanism of the twentieth century might become—if this vein is destined to grow broader. No one before him had so definitely broken the tight link which binds the artistic handling of a given tongue to the exclusive possession

[1] Teodor Jozef Konrad Korzeniowski, born in Ukraine in 1856, came of a family of exiles and of Polish nationality, studied at Cracow; on the eve of his entering the University, he felt the irresistible call of the sea. He voyaged for twenty years, first as a sailor, then as a captain in the British merchant marine. Naturalized English in 1884, he published in 1895 a novel under the name of Joseph Conrad, *Almayer's Folly*, the success of which decided his life. Married and settled in England, he wrote novels or short stories: *An Outcast of the Islands*, 1896; *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, 1898; *Tales of Unrest*, 1898; *The Inheritors*, 1901; *Youth*, 1902; *Typhoon*, 1903; *Romance*, 1903; *Nostromo*, 1904; *Lord Jim*, 1906; *The Secret Agent*, 1907; *A Set of Six*, 1908; *Under Western Eyes*, 1911; *'Twixt Land and Sea*, 1912; *Chance*, 1914; *Within the Tides*, 1915; *Victory*, 1915; *The Shadow-Line*, 1917; *The Arrow of Gold*, 1919; *Tales of the Sea*, 1919; *The Rescue*, 1920; autobiographical works: *The Mirror of the Sea*, 1906; *Some Reminiscences*, 1912; *Notes on Life and Letters*, 1921; critical articles, etc. See the studies by R. Curle (*Joseph Conrad*), 1914; Hugh Walpole (*Joseph Conrad*), 1916; E. Bendz (*Joseph Conrad, an Appreciation*), 1923.

of an intellectual nationality. The language of his childhood and youth is Polish; it remains that of his inner speech, except in moments of literary labour, when French steps into its place. He has been strongly influenced by the literature of France, and his technique is derived from that which was taught by our realists. English, first studied in books, then fully adopted by his mature personality, is the instrument of expression which his art employs in the process of explicit realization.

And yet, thanks to an exceptional gift of assimilation, this instrument has the most extensive range. Joseph Conrad's vocabulary shows all the concrete wealth of the Anglo-Saxon stock; he displays, in some fields at least, a rare virtuosity in the use of technical terms; his knowledge of the things and words of the sea—with which he is most intimately familiar—exceeds that of Kipling. He knows, at need, how to seek effects in the ample dignity of Latin vocables. So glowing, luxuriant and habitual is this delight in words, that it reveals, through its very development, a conscious apprenticeship of language, a possession clear and actual in all its parts; that abnormal something, to which, on English soil, the expert and complacent handling of linguistic resources seems to point. In fact, Joseph Conrad's prose style, at least during the early part of his career, would leave upon British ears an impression of slightly exaggerated sonorousness and rhythm.

His art is the most composite product. However essential may be the element of original initiative in his development, the form which he took up, either from instinctive choice or because he had experienced its appeal, had been created by others: it is the novel of adventure, as Stevenson and already Kipling were illustrating its new possibilities; and he combines with it the objective spirit of French naturalism. The movement and the method of his psychology, the attention he pays to the various points of view which cross and recross one another round each being, owe something to Henry James. Even a background of Slav sensibility, and the spirit of Russian novelists, are betrayed in the special quality of his perception of the mysterious, and in his philosophy of life.

This complex of influences is dominated by a temperament which turns it into a brilliant, rich and original alloy. Joseph Conrad is quite conscious of his manner; he has given a theory of it. This is the direct echo of his inevitable preferences; but one feels that it is encouraged as well by the doctrines of Maupassant and Flaubert. Art is self-sufficient; the artist has no object but to fully transmit the impression of reality; and the senses are the best, or rather the only, way open to this expression. Therefore the novelist must draw from all the resources of the arts, whether of colour and shape or of sound; his work should have the bright hues of painting, the solidity of sculpture, the rhythm and harmony of music. He has fulfilled this programme to the letter; not with painstaking accuracy, but with the sovereign ease of a talent which when obeying rules is but following its own instinct. The wealth, the vigour and the glow of his descriptions are second to none in literature. The scenes which he calls up are very varied; but their succession naturally finds a centre in the image of the sea; it is from the deck of a ship that we witness the unrolling of the sights of the world; the smiles and furies of the ocean, the dramas of sailing, distant shores, the landscapes and manners of Oceania, of Asia, of America, and of those English seaports whither the liners find their way back, make up an intensely vivid show which forces itself upon our glance like a striking, almost haunting scenery. The registering of lights, sounds, odours and tastes is with Joseph Conrad's characters a constant, automatic activity, which none of the emotions of life can interrupt. The artist who has fixed so many sensations, and found the most fitting words to express them, has contributed, along with Kipling, to broaden the descriptive range of the English language.

The inner world is no less a reality to Joseph Conrad. He does not, however, explore it with the same spontaneity; some effort in this field, if not some artifice, can be felt. On the one hand, his invention creates figures with firm outlines, whose moral beings, quite as much as their features, seize us with a sure conviction of their elementary truth. On the other, his psychological curiosity gives itself scope in slow ruminations, in analyses of dim souls, in complicated and subtle studies, where, no doubt, his intuitive sense of life still stands him in good stead, but where his perception is neither so definite nor so new as when confronted with the material universe. His desire for objectivity has often led him to present the facts of his plots as reflected in one or several minds, the visions of which the reader is to follow and harmonize; and this method gives rise to some uncertainty, as it does to high and rare effects.

A violent, at times a raw realist, Joseph Conrad is also a thinker and a poet. While he does not set as an end to his art the search for ideas, which he regards as the proper object of the philosopher, he has allowed the emotions of an intelligence which does not refuse itself the human privilege of feeling, to come out in half-tones through his work. Humour and pathos are to be found in his novels; and chiefly, an ever-present sense of the mystery of fate, and an implicit, diffused, profound ethical element. The mood of his thought is pessimistic; almost all his books lay stress on the numberless varieties of suffering. He has no idealized hero; the weakness of nature everywhere asserts itself. In spite of the endeavours of the best, themselves fallible, ineradicable selfishness turns man into a wolf to man. The son of political exiles, the child of a nationality and a race long persecuted, reveals himself in the pressing suggestion of union, pity and solidarity which emanates from his work. This appeal lends it a glow of sympathy, and raises it above the level of fiction pure and simple. But its most contagious idealism lies in the tragic or dreamy sense of the unfathomable unknown which we brush past at every moment; in that mystic spiritualization of the face of life or that of earth, which suddenly casts a glamour of poetry over the outlines of the action or the landscape. To the influences which Joseph Conrad has felt, one more, that of Symbolism, is to be added; or rather, his temperament found itself naturally attuned to this note as it was to others.

He is not popular, in spite of the very high esteem in which he is held by the connoisseurs, because of the harsh flavour of his work, foreign and European, careless of some conventions of the average English taste. He is doubtlessly not one of the great creative geniuses; but his personality is of the first order; he has, through a sheer miracle, wrought ill-assorted elements into a strong synthesis; he has, in a learnt language, fashioned an irresistible style, loaded with the nervous impact of stern realities, carried onward by a rhythm which not only multiplies their hard rigour, but bathes it in a meditative music through which the soul catches an undertone of softer harmonies.

Arnold Bennett[1] has written much; but the highest interest and probably the permanent value of his work are concentrated in a definitely limited group of novels and short stories. The rest—drama, journalism, criticism, and even the studies of manners bearing on other subjects—is of secondary importance. He owes his place in literature to his pictures of provincial life.

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[1] Arnold Bennett, born in 1867, near Hanley, in the "potteries" (Staffordshire), the son of a solicitor, developed by degrees into a journalist and critic, edited a magazine for women; his first novel, *A Man from the North*, appeared in 1898; then he devoted himself entirely to literature; resided in France from 1900 to 1908, married a Frenchwoman, and discovered the field of observation wherein would lie his success in writing *Anna of the Five Towns*, 1902. Several years intervened, full of copious production, before the success of *The Old Wives' Tale*, 1908, gave him his place in literature. He exploited the same vein in a trilogy of novels: *Clayhanger*, 1910; *Hilda Lessways*, 1911; *These Twain*, 1916; and tried to renew his style in *The Pretty Lady*, 1918, etc. His writings, as diverse as they are unequal, comprise, with all kinds of secondary work, short tales: *Tales of the Five Towns*, 1905; *The Grim Smile of the Five Towns*, 1907; *The Matador of the Five Towns*, 1912; plays: *Milestones*, 1912; *The Great Adventure*, 1913, etc.; books of autobiographical or critical interest: *The Truth about an Author*, 1903; *How to Become an Author*, 1903; *Things That Have Interested Me*, 1921. See the study by F. J. H. Darton (Writers of the Day), 1915.

Though unaware, in this field, of any conscious imitation, he takes up a tradition, that of minute, and at the same time broad and healthy realism, dwelling with indulgence upon the portraits of mediocre beings; his line is that of Dickens and George Eliot. No other is more English; and nothing is more national than the matter to which Arnold Bennett applies this method. Neither Dickens, whose social perspective is older by a whole century, nor George Eliot, who described a different world, had touched upon it before him. It is a drab and dull-looking mass of human beings, who swarm under the smoky skies of the industrial districts. Almost a parasitic growth, at first, in the body of the nation, it has become one of its essential and typical tissues. Among all industries, that of the "potteries" is one of the most cheerless because of the total absence of that romantic setting, whether fiery or grimly dark, which constitutes the poetry of iron or mining works. In these circles, where the average features of the race have been able to develop freely, escaping any intense or differentiated aspect, Arnold Bennett does not devote his attention to the industrial working-man, who already is invested with associations of pitying or disquieted curiosity; but to a lower middle class of shopkeepers, clerks, professional people, whose characters are set off by no specially striking trait of any kind; a numerous class, shading off into a vast population, spread over the whole land, and owing its distinctive quality only to the local influences of the sky and the soil, as well as to the imperious will of the powerful industry on which, directly or indirectly, the district lives; a modern, neutral and prosaic subject-matter, if there ever was any.

Arnold Bennett's originality does not all reside in this choice. As compared with his predecessors, he is himself more modern, more conscious; he wishes to be freed from the influences which, in the novels of Dickens and George Eliot, interfere with the objectivity of the artist. He has breathed the atmosphere of another age; and his youth has felt the spell of foreign masters, who have enlightened his instinct. In the works of the brothers Goncourt, of Maupassant, he has found the model of a naturalism which effaces the writer's preferences behind the object; in those of Turgenev, he has found a pity which will have nothing to do with sentimentalism; while not resembling them, he succeeds to a fairly large extent in following them. To the most English of themes, he thus brings a technique sincere, but permeated with European lessons. In so far as the artistic faultlessness he aims at leaves room for a personal reaction, Arnold Bennett allows us to feel in him a contained half-pessimism, limited by the strong sense of duty, directed towards effort, soothed as well by the security which radiates from his very subject, from human groups in which moral responsibility is firm and safe. For Arnold Bennett, in spite of all, carries in his inmost fibres the preoccupation of conduct.

The Old Wives' Tale, the trilogy of *Clayhanger, Hilda Lessways,* and *These Twain,* make up a central fresco round which other tales—novels or short stories—group themselves. In spite of certain differences, a lighter touch and also a less abundant wealth in the other books of the series than in the first, they are all stamped with the unity of an artistic method. Its process is a number of minute touches, laid side by side and close together, answering to a truth which is self-sufficient, and does not aim at anything beyond itself. Effects of amplitude, of power, even of beauty, rise in the long run from their accumulated mass. Each scene, considered separately, is shown under a precise and somewhat cold light, in spite of the humour; and this picture of reality seems to be guided by the same ideal as that of photography. But life springs from the movement which educes one scene out of another; the mental image of an active social influence, with innumerable, subtle or tangible aspects, is built out of all the pressures through which circumstances, material and moral forces, shape the destinies that are being told us. And these destinies have in them the particular logic of likelihood; they impress us with the feeling of a kind of fatality, rooted in the temperament of each being, developing with a flexible determinism, which is crossed with incidents and crises, and at every moment leaves some margin to freedom. Arnold Bennett is not a professed analyst; but he has created characters; his intuition of some souls penetrates them and seizes them with a vigorous hold.

These creations are neither very many nor very diverse. The special field of his psychology is that provincial lower middle class in which refinement is unknown, intelligence is simple, and complexity is restricted to feelings. Competent judges acknowledge a local truth in his most carefully studied portraits; it is said that the characters which he has best known how to vitalize fit in inseparably with the setting in which he has placed them. They wear indeed a family look. Their truth, however, exceeds the limits of that circle of the "Five Towns," in which their lives are so narrowly cooped up; from which they escape only to come back to it; and the simple artlessness of which they preserve, even in the pathos to which they sometimes rise. Their humanity broadens their significance; in them the common basis of a whole class and a whole people is visible. A cosmopolitan in some of his tastes, but resolutely English in his essential preferences, Arnold Bennett does not hide it that his moral judgment accepts those narrow lives, with their philistine ignorance, their prejudices, their honesty and unconscious heroism, just as his art finds in them a racy matter for humour, mockery, dramatic emotion.

Arnold Bennett's work has limits, and these obvious enough. The minute slowness of the method implies some heaviness; in its self-command, it still leaves too much room for explicit effects; there is nothing here like Maupassant's concentration. Perfectly adapted to the subject-matter, this art submits to its laws, and somewhat shares in its quality; it does not satisfy the finest demands of taste; it leaves the highest activities of mind outside its devices and its effects. Those novels are poor in poetry, in imaginative intensity, in variety of shades, in philosophical originality. Careless of most problems, they impoverish a reality which is, in fact, saturated with what they leave out. On the other hand, they rest upon a solid foundation; their harmony with a certain national and human nature, with some fundamental needs of our instinct of truth, imparts to them the character of what may last.

John Galsworthy[1] belongs to the same generation as Arnold Bennett. But his more supple talent seems younger. Among the masters of the present day, he is one of those whose development may still have new features in store.

Born of equally typical English stock, and of a class more traditionally rooted to the soil, the country gentry, he yet has received as well a graft from abroad. His travels, his reading, have brought him very widely into contact with the thoughts, the manners, the letters of many peoples. France and Russia have had a share in the formation of his realism. But Nature had fitted him for the thorough assimilation of those influences. The sap of the English genius, which now will be more soft and now more rough, in him has fed the germ of a fine and generous sensibility; and while endowing him with that moral courage which is often the source of the idealism of the race, has fostered also a gift of delicate perception, a keen penetration of intelligence. More aristocratic than H. G. Wells, he has thus brought no less clear and no less bold a mind to the analysis of the social order; as representative of his own country as Arnold Bennett, he has more efficiently mingled the national instincts with the lessons of unashamed objectivity which English literature was receiving from the outside world.

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[1] John Galsworthy, born in Surrey in 1867, of "gentry" stock, studied at Harrow and Oxford, was called to the Bar, travelled in Europe and throughout the world, and published novels and short stories: *From the Four Winds*, 1897; *Jocelyn*, 1898; *Villa Rubein*, 1900; *A Man of Devon*, 1901; *The Island Pharisees*, 1904; *The Man of Property*, 1906; *The Country House*, 1907; *A Commentary*, 1908; *Fraternity*, 1908; *A Motley*, 1910; *The Patrician*, 1911; *The Dark Flower*, 1913; *The Little Man*, 1915; *The Freelands*, 1915; *Beyond*, 1917; *Five Tales*, 1918; *A Saint's Progress*, 1919; *Tatterdemalion*, 1920; *In Chancery*, 1920; *To Let*, 1922; essays: *The Inn of Tranquillity*, 1912; *A Sheaf*, 2 vols., 1916–19. For his plays, see below, sect. 3. See the studies by Sheila Kaye-Smith (*John Galsworthy*), 1916; Phelps (*The Advance of the English Novel*), 1916; Chevrillon (*Trois études de littérature anglaise*), 1921.

His temperament is that of a complete artist, finished off by the emotions of a noble heart and the disquietude of a courageous thought. The exceptional quality of his work is due to the width of this range. Each key, in itself, is not free from some analogy with tones already heard; but it rings with a very pure sound, and the whole scale has the mellowness of a delightfully original art. John Galsworthy's criticism moves on parallel lines to that intellectual endeavour whose example, set by Matthew Arnold, Meredith and Samuel Butler, is followed among the contemporaries by Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells; but he combines with it elements which are his own: a more thorough cosmopolitan detachment, the independence of a moral nature which looks without any prejudice at the prominent or subtle traits of the British character, and appreciates them with bold freedom; on the other hand, a fundamental moderation, in which one divines, not the need of compromise, but a many-sided perception of things; a tact of the mind which never lets itself go as far as system, exaggeration, paradox, and which tempers logic with common sense. The pity of John Galsworthy continues a thoroughly English tradition; it reminds one of Dickens, and of a whole century stirred by social compunction; it adds to that general background, to that philanthropy of so many tender souls, a more quick and intense, often painful thrill, which resembles that of the Russian novel, the glow of a fraternity in which the mysticism of the East seems to have infused its ardour, and which extends the love of life to all nature. However, this cult of sentiment is free from all sentimentality—or almost so. Almost always, the reserve of the man, the economy of the writer, check the expression of emotion short of the limit where it would lose the merit of sobriety; and almost always feeling is imbued, from within, with a consciousness of its relativity, which intellectualizes it.

After tentative beginnings, the personality of John Galsworthy shows itself in *The Island Pharisees,* in which the two main directions of his work appear. The mental passivity, the lethargy of heart, and all the selfishness of a class, a nation, a tradition, which defend their integrity, in the name exclusively of their will to live, are seen through and through by a reflection which awakes. Stripped and reduced to essentials, this analysis of British society in the shortened perspective of a few figures and brief episodes, is of rare power, and of an extreme acuity, which the hesitations of a still unequal art make at times excessive. It is conducted in the interest of an uncompromising sincerity of mind, the example of which is in this case sought outside England. Again, the violent or narrow decrees by which that order is forced upon rebellious instincts, are denounced as a tyranny; the rights of passion, and the freedom of a spontaneous experience which redeems its risks through the gift of self, are contrasted with the rigid demands of utilitarian health; the impulses of the heart are set against the policy of wisdom. In all its central and most typical part, the work of John Galsworthy develops this double antithesis.

He lends it more weight, more breadth, and also more demonstrative force, by investing it abundantly with concrete substance. *The Country House* analyses on a more detailed scale the little world which revolves round the traditional authority of the squire. *The Patrician* follows up the struggle between the individual and the caste to the circles of the aristocracy. *Fraternity* boldly carries the problem among the very men who endeavour to solve it—the intellectuals, the artists; and through the powerlessness of their attempts, suggests the stubbornness of the evil, of the moral separation of classes, which no individual remedies can cure. *The Freelands* directs the study towards the special domain of the land problem; *The Dark Flower* and *Beyond* bring it back to that conflict of passion of which John Galsworthy never loses sight, and leaving out all precise theses, analyse the revolt of the fervid or multiple truth of feelings, against the calm and permanency which orthodox happiness requires.

In a society, however, founded upon money, property is the root of the outstanding oppositions of interests, feelings and ideas. A series of narratives gather round the fate of a family which symbolizes the reign of the instinct of personal ownership. *The Forsyte Saga* ("The Man of Property," "In Chancery," "To Let," etc.) has the powerful range of those vast imaginative constructions in which the modern novel, giving itself the broader scope of several generations and varied plots, has encompassed the psychological and social complexity of life. The masters of the hour, the financiers, merged in the class of the landed gentry, and gathering round them all the old forces of conservation, are studied in those works as the most vigorous representatives of the present order. A self-interested discipline, in them and about them, violently represses the independent powers of human nature—love, art, dreams, youth, change; and this drama, which, while enacted in the recesses of the soul, preserves a supremely precise and evocative significance, sums up the deepest struggle of our time between material civilization and moral truth.

Quite as much as those of H. G. Wells, John Galsworthy's novels are thus instinct with that social disquietude, the magnetism of which to-day attracts so many energies. But his thought, more finely shaded, is less aggressive; it partakes rather of the artist's or the moralist's curiosity, than of the spirit and zeal of a cause. His familiar acquaintance with the circles he describes lends a more just and keen impartiality to his picture of the ruling classes. He has delineated the character of a Jolyon or a Soames Forsyte with a careful attention to the living humanity that hides under the most hardened crust of individual or family selfishness. His intelligence is too vividly aware of the danger that lurks in simple solutions, to bind itself to a doctrine. However, the suggestion which emanates from his writings is active, and often audacious; not only does he prompt us to a searching compassion for all mean lives, and the victims of their own weaknesses or of the hardness of the strong; but he unveils sores, and points out remedies; he has denounced unjust laws, a summary procedure, an unnecessarily cruel penal system; he has demanded a relaxing of the statutory bonds of marriage. Brought to bear on the unlimited ownership of land or capital, his analysis has dissolved its juridical, moral, practical foundation; there exists in him a broad socialism of feeling and reflection.

It is a token of the high worth of his art, that a faith implying a conflict of the will against things as they are, and tending, in some directions at least, to narrow sympathies, should have added a poignant accent to his interpretation of reality, without obscuring or warping any part of the image which he has drawn. The realism of John Galsworthy is of a delicate, and so to say scrupulous quality. His desire for justice is not infallible; but it is sincere, and will be acknowledged even by such as may charge the creator of the Forsytes with vigorous aversions. Instead of seeking objectivity in coldness, he finds it in the tenderness of conscience. He is thus able to react to things with the emotion, but for which the artist's picture cannot be true. All alive with sensibility, his technique is that of an impressionist. Nature, the human world, characters, appear to us in intermittent and partial visions, the acuity of which is dependent on their limited objects, the mind devoting itself entirely to a single aspect of ephemeral experience. The instinct of composition, however, is not lacking; under their fugacious discontinuity, those glimpses are connected by a very sure sense of logic and equilibrium. The fragments of scenery make up landscapes, the social impressions create surroundings, the gestures and words of the personages organize into characters which develop but endure. This art is not even half-way to "imagism."

As a painter of the physical universe and of the soul, John Galsworthy is a poet. The gleams of sky, earth and water in which he bathes his tales have a tender, rapturous charm; an accuracy, and, at the same time, a fluidity of contours, which remind one of Oriental sketches, acutely distinct, and melting into light-grey mist. After so many observers, he has known how to render with personal touches the freshness of the English country-side, and the shimmering of a cloud-veiled light. His psychology is not methodical, painstaking; it has the freedom of an intuitive talent; it reveals the secret movement of the inner life as it perceives it, through flashes and divinings.

His studies of characters are very varied. Although there is a feminine fibre in his moral nature, it would be unfair not to recognize that he has created virile figures, with robust relief. It cannot be denied, however, that he has endued the portraits of women and girls with a happy grace, or that he has treated problems of feeling by organizing them round passionate love as a centre. His heroines, ardent and spontaneous, do not show the brilliant intellectuality which Meredith has imparted to his own; and in spite of the exceptional penetration of his analyses, John Galsworthy has never aimed at the extreme complexity in which some psychologists find their crowning achievement. He is too genuinely desirous of truth to lend an artificial intensity to the stream of consciousness. In his eyes all human beings, even such as are most keenly tormented by the fevers of greed or desire, are intimately related to the animal and vegetable nature which on all sides surrounds them, and whose obscure sympathy is like an accompanying undertone to the theme of their destiny. His instinct is too much coloured with pantheism for him to absorb the world in man. Art to him is a spell which does not stimulate individuality, but dissolves it. His personages, however particularized, ever possess something of the quality of a type.

The action of his novels is at times slackened by a dreamy mood of contemplation which in its essence is philosophical and mystic, and seizes the illusory stirrings of the universal soul in the agitations of individual beings. The elasticity of the novel has not always proved to him a favourable influence; and the stricter form of the drama may have told upon his art as a salutary constraint. Still, his technique shows a just sense of architecture; he knows how to construct a subject, distribute his masses, group his contrivances and effects. The interpretation of characters with him is rarely indirect, and dictated by the author to the reader; it spontaneously radiates from all the activities and attitudes through which the original being of each hero expresses itself. His style, eminently flexible, is readily adapted to very diverse functions; quivering, nervous, coloured in descriptions, vigorous and suggestive in the rendering of states of consciousness, it lends itself to widely different tones, and becomes in the language of every person the indispensable instrument of the very thought to which we are listening. Impassioned as it is, it can use irony with superior success.

Concentration agrees well with John Galsworthy's talent. His short stories and impressions—things seen and etched with a light sure hand—are of high value. He has written thoughtful essays, rich with æsthetic lucidity, upon dramatic art and the craft of literature.

Besides those masters, and other writers whom a less rapid survey would be bound not to pass over,[1] the contemporary English novel shows a profusion of young talents. A study whose chronological limit is 1914 cannot give them the attention they deserve. On the eve of the war, they had hardly done more than to raise expectations. Their figures have since become more definite, without reaching yet full development. Their individual features cannot be sketched here. It is possible, on the other hand, to sum up the general tendencies which they betoken.[2]

The English novel of to-day remains the most supple artistic form; it is, indeed, more elastic than ever. For of the characteristics which it had assumed during the preceding years, the larger number have not ceased to be prominent: a more objective realism, an outspoken frankness in the description of passion, a bold social criticism, the free discussion of all problems. It thus draws its matter from the most diverse sources. But besides, the ideal of a more firm construction, towards which the age of Hardy had striven in the light of the French example, seems to have been given up. On this point, another foreign influence has replaced that of Flaubert. The more concrete and so to say instantaneous art of the Russian novelists has offered English writers a model better adapted to their instincts; and what Tchekov was gaining Maupassant had to lose.

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[1] At the end of the nineteenth century and in the beginning of the twentieth, the novel in England has been wonderfully productive. Among the authors whose merit or signal interest does not permit of their being passed over in silence, mention should be made of the following: Sir James Barrie, born in 1860; his Scottish novels describe with a spirit of tender and humorous realism the life of the lowland peasantry. He forms, with Ian Maclaren, G. Douglas, J. R. Crockett, the "Kailyard School" of writers: *A Window in Thrums*, 1889; *The Little Minister*, 1891; *Margaret Ogilvie*, 1896, etc.; see study by J. A. Hammerton; for his plays, see below.—John Davys Beresford, born in 1873, a realist: *The History of Jacob Stall*, 1911; *A Candidate for Truth*, 1912; *The Invisible Event*, 1915; *These Lynnekers*, 1916, etc.—Sir Walter Besant (1836–1901), represents the social and historical novel: *All Sorts and Conditions of Men*, 1882; *All in a Garden Fair*, 1883, etc. —Algernon Blackwood, born in 1869; the novelist of terror and of the supernatural: *The Centaur*, 1911; *A Prisoner in Fairyland*, 1913, etc.—Rhoda Broughton, born in 1840, a realist: *Dear Faustina*, 1897, etc.—Sir A. Conan Doyle, born in 1869; the historical novel and detective story: *Micah Clarke*, 1888; *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, 1891, etc.—Sarah Grand, born in 1862, a realist and feminist: *A Domestic Experiment*, 1891; *Babs the Impossible*, 1900, etc.—Robert Hichens, born in 1864, a satirical and romantic writer: *The Green Carnation*, 1894; *The Garden of Allah*, 1905, etc.—Anthony Hope (Sir A. Hope Hawkins), born in 1863; adventure and social novel: *The Prisoner of Zenda*, 1894, etc.—W. H. Hudson (1846–1922), born in the Argentine; the novel of natural observation and imagination: *The Purple Land*, 1885; *Hampshire Days*, 1903; *Green Mansions*, 1904; *A Shepherd's Life*, 1910, etc.—Lucas Malet (Mary St. Leger Harrison), born in 1852, the daughter of Charles Kingsley; a realist and feminist: *The History of Sir Richard Calmady*, 1901, etc.—W. H. Mallock, born in 1849; satirist and realist: *The New Republic*, 1877; *A Human Document*, 1892, etc.—Leonard Merrick, born in 1864; a realist: *The Actor-Manager*, 1898; *The Quaint Companions*, 1903, etc.—W. de Morgan, realist: *Joseph Vance*, 1906, etc.—Arthur Morrison, realistic and social novel: *Tales of Mean Streets*, 1894; *A Child of the Jago*, 1896, etc.—Eden Phillpotts, born in 1862; the realistic and descriptive novel: *Lying Prophets*, 1896; *Children of the Mist*, 1898; *Sons of the Morning*, 1900, etc.—Sir A. Quiller-Couch, born in 1863; the "regionalist" novel: *Troy Town*, 1888; *From a Cornish Window*, 1906, etc.—Olive Schreiner (Mrs. Cronwright), born in 1865; a realist: *The Story of an African Farm*, 1883, etc.—R. Whiteing, born in 1840; a realist, social writer: *No. 5 John Street*, 1899, etc.—Israel Zangwill, born in 1864, a realist: *The Children of the Ghetto*, 1892, etc.

[2] The principal among these would be Mr. Gilbert Cannan (born in 1884: translation of *Jean Christophe*, of M. Romain Rolland, 1910–13; *Round the Corner*, 1913; *Mendel*, 1916, etc.); Mr. E. M. Forster (born in 1879: *Howard's End*, 1911, etc.); Mr. Walter Lionel George (born in 1882: *The Second Blooming*, 1914, etc.); Mr. D. H. Lawrence (born in 1887: *Sons and Lovers*, 1913; *The Rainbow*, 1915, etc.); Mr. Compton Mackenzie (born in 1883: *The Passionate Elopement*, 1911; *Carnival*, 1912; *Sinister Street*, vols. i. and ii., 1913–14; continued in *The Early History of Sylvia Scarlett*, 1918, and *Sylvia and Michael*, 1919; *Guy and Pauline*, 1915; *Poor Relations*, 1919, etc.); Miss May Sinclair (*The Divine Fire*, 1904; *The Three Sisters*, 1914; *Mary Olivier*, 1919, etc.); Mr. Frank Swinnerton (born in 1884: *Nocturne*, 1917, etc.); Mr. Francis Brett Young (born in 1884: *Deep Sea*, 1914; *Black Diamonds*, 1922, etc.); Mr. Hugh Walpole (born in 1884: *Mr. Perrin and Mr. Traill*, 1911; *Fortitude*, 1913; *The Duchess of Wrexe*, 1914; *The Dark Forest*, 1916; *The Green Mirror*, 1918; *The Captives*, 1920; *The Cathedral*, 1922, etc.).—Mr. James Joyce, up to 1914, had only published poetry and short stories (born in 1882: *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, 1916; *Ulysses*, 1922, etc.); he is a post-war writer, like Miss Clemence Dane (Winifred Ashton), *Legend*, 1920, etc.; Mr. Stephen MacKenna (*Sonia*, 1917, etc.); Miss Dorothy Richardson (*Pointed Roofs*, 1916; *The Tunnel*, 1919; *Deadlock*, 1920, etc.); Mrs. Virginia Woolf (*Night and Day*, 1920, etc.). For a comprehensive study of this generation, see A. Chevalley, *Le Roman anglais de notre temps*, 1921.

This movement is, at is were, a return to a national preference, whose sway a generation of writers had endeavoured to resist, most often in vain; one seems to perceive in the change the recoil from a constraint which had visibly been weighing upon many works. But the genuine causes of the reaction which modified the very ideal of fictitious writing, were deeper. This reaction was already growing apparent during the first years of the century; it sprang from a new attitude of thought, the effect of which was to substitute disconnected spontaneousness for motionless coherence in forms. Psychology reinstated intuition in its full rights; a more precise sense of the inner life revealed the essential discontinuity of our states of consciousness; realism itself became discontinuous, the better to grasp, and the less to alter, either the original quality of our impressions, or that of the material world, in so far as it is reflected in our minds. The influence of the Russian novel was due to the harmony between its characteristics and a universal desire for a truth more spontaneous, more direct, and not yet elaborated by the architectural needs of logic. The philosophy of James and Bergson, the music of Debussy, "pointilliste" painting, the fortune of the cinema, and, but yesterday, imagist poetry, were related with this general depreciation of intellectual schemes.

The free and often amorphous quality of contemporary English novels is in a certain sense an effect of the economy of effort; but this tendency would not be followed, did not the artists' conscience justify them in so doing. The new ideal does not give up all attempt to make a work of art one; but this unity is now otherwise understood. It is less done, it is more doing; here also, what is dynamic is being preferred to what is static.[1] One must confess that the progress thus realized in complexity and subtlety, is compensated for, as a rule, by a loss in clearness and concentration, which may be regretted even by other readers than those whose tastes have been shaped by the Latin tradition. The passing from the organic style of a Galsworthy to the systematic disorganization of that of a Joyce is, in a slightly different plane, a consequence of the same cause. The fact that analogous schools or movements are meeting with success almost everywhere in Europe, would strengthen our impression that this is a general development, linked up with the rhythm of the international mind.

However, the novels of a John Davys Beresford, a Gilbert Cannan, a Frank Swinnerton, a David Herbert Lawrence, still testify to a persistent moral disquietude. In this respect, the generation of to-day more definitely continues that of yesterday. It remains, as viewed in far the greater number of interesting works, instinct with a mood of revolt against the existing order of ideas and of facts. Already in the years before the war it was evincing a tendency to pessimism. Its criticism of social values, in spite of a diffused humanitarianism, is more negative than substantial; it destroys established hierarchies, rather than it sets up new ones. Its central endeavour seems to be a strong determination to be sincere, which will run the risk of being brutal or cruel, provided it can thus be fruitful. So it is that the problem of the relations between the sexes is treated, under all its aspects, with a candour which utterly nullifies the reserve of Victorian respectability. The desire for an acute, uncompromising analysis, able to seize upon all the interior secrets of the soul, is more and more conspicuous. The influence of Henry James had directed novelists towards the psychology of the relative; as Browning had done in his monologues, they sought to suppress themselves in their works, to show us the world exclusively through the eyes of their characters, and from the point of view of each. To-day this search for the implicit and the profound reaches the subconscious. Even though this word is not mentioned, and the Freudian theory is not explicitly appealed to, everything takes place in the works of many as if obscure desires, unsuspected impulses, were from their dark recesses guiding the clear notions, the wills and the acts of responsible beings.

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[1] One of the features of this change is the return of the novel to a wide range of subject, to a great number of personages, and to actions which involve whole families and generations. It is now customary to group works into series; to follow out a destiny, a theme, through time and space. The *Forsyte Saga* of Mr. Galsworthy and the Trilogy of Mr. Arnold Bennett are the forerunners of analogous groupings of works, with many of their literary rivals. The unity, in the measure in which it exists, is here borrowed from life, from a natural succession, and not from an artistic frame.

These characteristics, however, are far from universal. To the various classes of the reading public, according to temperaments, social degrees, and even ages, different styles will correspond. The contemporary novel, leaving out the writers who are anxious to open the way to the future, offers all the range of the more traditional or reassuring tones; and the sensational or detective novel, the novel of adventure, the novel of humour, the sentimental novel, the novel of fashionable life, still show proof of a vitality which at times rises to the level of distinction.

3. The Theatre.—The English theatre, after a long period of stagnation, was revived about the end of the nineteenth century by a series of converging initiatives, among which the leading one was the work of Bernard Shaw.[1] The craving for more dramatic situations, and for a more modern technique, made itself felt at that time with already mature writers, such as Pinero and Jones.[2] Their plays only testify to a vague desire for renovation, and rest satisfied with a compromise. The influence of Ibsen, which Edmund Gosse and Bernard Shaw[3] contributed to spread, more strongly directed the younger writers towards the philosophical and social drama; whilst the comedies of Oscar Wilde,[4] in a lighter vein, were a solitary example of the very brilliant revival of an old form.

Interpreted with ability by Gosse and Shaw, translated by William Archer,[5] and brought through the latter's articles to the knowledge of the many, the drama in the manner of Ibsen held undisputed sway for a score of years. It roused vivid interest, and pretty numerous imitations. The beginning, in 1904, of the lease of the "Court Theatre" by H. Granville Barker and Vedrenne is a landmark in the history of English literature. This playhouse was the centre of an active movement of progress and experiments, the benefit of which was felt both in the writing of plays conceived according to the new spirit, and in the renovation of stagecraft. The tendencies which thus came to the front were a regard for truth in stage setting and the style of players, a more forcible representation of real life in plots and dialogues, and the selection of such themes as to put to the test the moral and social traditions through which the past still controls the present.

The vitality of the English theatre, from 1890 to 1914, is almost entirely to be found in the often resounding, but rarely popular, successes achieved by intense plays, written in the light of that ideal. The best dramas of William Somerset Maugham,[1] of St. John Hankin, of H. Granville Barker, are not unworthy of being studied along with those of Shaw; and the same influence can even be traced to some extent in such comedies as Arnold Bennett's and Gilbert Cannan's.

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[1] See above, Book VII. chap. iv. sect. 4.

[2] Sir Arthur Pinero, born in 1855: *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, 1893; *The Gay Lord Quex*, 1899; *Mid-Channel*, 1909.—Henry Arthur Jones, born in 1851: *Breaking a Butterfly*, 1885; *Saints and Sinners*, 1891; *Mrs. Dane's Defence*, 1900, etc. *The Renaissance of the English Drama*, 1895.

[3] Edmund Gosse, *Studies in the Literatures of Northern Europe*, 1879; G. B. Shaw, *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, 1891.

[4] See above, Book VII. chap. iii. sect. 3.

[5] Born in 1856; dramatic critic to the *World*, 1884-1905; published with H. Granville Barker, *A National Theatre, Scheme and Estimates*, 1907.

That relative concentration has not been lasting. At the present time, the main lines of the dramatic movement are less clearly marked. Already before 1914 the first symptoms of a change appeared in the success of provincial schools and local initiatives. The revival of the Irish theatre is the most remarkable of these signs;[2] and the "Abbey Theatre" of Dublin was in its turn an encouragement and model to the "Repertory Theatres" of Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham.

On the whole, the impulse given to the English drama by the renascence of the years 1890–1910 has not ceased to prove fruitful. Realism and naturalism are still the predominant inspirations of the more interesting writers; the problem plays are numerous yet, and social criticism remains in the foreground. But besides those tendencies, others have become apparent. Between the mediocrity of the conventional theatre, which has not lost the favour of the man in the street, and the harsh frankness of the "modern" play, the national temperament has sought, and found, compromises of various descriptions. One of these varieties is the comedy of sentiment, refreshed by a graceful imagination and by humour. The dramatic successes of Sir James Barrie point to the persistence, in the English public, of tastes which are too deep-rooted ever to disappear.[3] He has known how to mingle a now comic, now poetical fancy with the soft emotion which hearts feed upon; how to reconcile childish simplicity and symbolism in ways which remind one either of Maeterlinck, or of the Russian drama. Spontaneous and sincere as they are, these elements are mixed by a very conscious artistic purpose, in which a shade of artificiality can be traced.

Meanwhile, the drama in verse, which several attempts had tried to call to life again since the time of Tennyson and Browning, was winning on the stage victories significant enough to create, on several occasions, an impression that the prose of language and of themes was suffering decisive repulses. Stephen Phillips's *Paolo and Francesca* was hailed as a masterpiece; its lyricism has kept a romantic elaborate beauty; but the combined imitations of Elizabethan intensity and Greek soberness are no compensation for the lack of dramatic life.[4] Since then, that vein has not ceased to produce works of unequal merit; and the historical tragedies of John Drinkwater and John Masefield, whatever may be their weaknesses, have realized effects of undeniable power. But with them the drama in verse appeals to the national consciousness; and its spirit draws nearer a popular, not a scholarly inspiration.

However, the most finished plays of the present day, and the movements which seem most hopeful, are connected with that revival of drama under the stress of social criticism, the most brilliant representative of which was Shaw in the previous generation. The theatre of John Galsworthy[5] is not a compromise; it is a supple and fine adaptation of the philosophical type to the concrete necessities of the stage. Each play is built on a frame of ideas; but these are not put in from the outside; such situations are selected as will, through their spontaneous development, suggest to our minds the terms between which an abstract relation may be established. This notion of the problem drama is the healthiest; John Galsworthy claims not to follow any other; and he has most often succeeded in keeping to it. The pictures which he has drawn of the conflicts of forces or feelings, from which a susceptible conscience will realize the complex nature of duty, preserve a truly objective spirit; they stimulate reflection rather than they teach a doctrine. His apprenticeship to law stands him in good stead here, and he presents the pros and cons of a case forcefully and clearly. From the very fact, however, that his humanity is truly unbiased, and that his mood, in contrast to the hard juridical spirit, is one of tender sensitiveness, he does take sides; his plays, like his novels, breathe a generous and restrained revolt of the heart and of thought. Their technique has assimilated without effort the changes which make the new drama different from the old. The drawing of characters is here more firm than in the novels; and reduced to essential elements, the plots proceed with more energy. The dialogues keep half-way between the mere photography of familiar conversation, and the conventional language of the stage. Vivacious, strong, soberly moving, these dramatic comedies are instinct, almost always, with a very safe realism; and their high artistic quality would be unexceptionable, if all the characters were equally convincing, or if the action, stripped down to a limit, did not at times seem a little thin.

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[1] William Somerset Maugham, born in 1874: *Mrs. Craddock,* 1902; *Lady Frederick,* 1907; *The Land of Promise,* 1914, etc.—St. John Hankin (1869–1909): *The Return of the Prodigal,* 1905; *The Last of the De Mullins,* 1908, etc.; *Plays,* 2 vols., 1923.—Harley Granville Barker, born in 1877: *The Voysey Inheritance,* 1905; *Waste,* 1907.—Arnold Bennett (see above, sect. 2): *Milestones,* 1912; *The Great Adventure,* 1913, etc.—Gilbert Cannan (see above, sect. 2): *Four Plays,* 1902; *Seven Plays,* 1923.

[2] See above, chap. iii. sect. 4.

[3] See above, sect. 2: *The Admirable Crichton,* 1903; *Peter Pan,* 1904; *A Kiss for Cinderella,* 1916; *Dear Brutus,* 1917, etc.

[4] Stephen Phillips (1868–1915): *Paolo and Francesca,* 1899; *Herod,* 1900; *The Sin of David,* 1904; *Nero,* 1906, etc.—Laurence Binyon, born in 1869: *Attila.*—John Drinkwater, born in 1882: *Abraham Lincoln,* 1918; *Mary Stuart,* 1921; *Cromwell,* 1923.

[5] See above, sect. 2. *Plays,* vol. i. ("The Silver Box," "Joy," "Strife"), 1909; *Justice,*

On the other hand, the "regionalist" revival and the democratic spirit are prompting some very interesting attempts. The Manchester "Repertory Theatre" has sought in the dialect and the humour of Lancashire a popular inspiration, which feeds a series of original works.[1] The vigorous talent of John Masefield[2] has drawn from an analogous source. The "pageant" movement seems hardly so far to have produced more than a wider revival of dramatic and historical curiosity; but it is indeed from such general influences that in a given public those subconscious preparations will result, from which in due course periods of artistic blooming will grow. In the same direction is felt the work of the "People's Theatre"; this aims at a renewal of formulæ by means of a frankly social realism, and appeals to the memories of the national or provincial past, in the form in which they are accepted and actually lived by the remembrance of the crowd. It is not possible yet to foresee whether those various efforts will succeed in really regenerating the English stage; but they bespeak, as in several other fields, a resolve to impose man's will upon nature, which is itself probably the sign of a natural energy, and for this very reason would justify much hopefulness.

In the drama, no less than in the novel, the most active influence to-day is that of the Russian example. The confessed indebtedness of some playwrights to the optics of the picture palace testifies, like the breaking up of construction and the discontinuous style with novelists, to a fatigue of logical attention, and also to the search for subtle new effects, through amorphous and spontaneous suggestions.[3]

1910; *The Little Dream*, 1911; *The Pigeon*, 1912; *The Eldest Son*, 1912; *The Fugitive*, 1913; *The Mob*, 1914; *A Bit of Love*, 1915; *The Foundations*, 1917; *The Skin-Game*, 1920; *Loyalties*, 1922. See study by Skemp "The Plays of Mr. John Galsworthy" (*Essays by Members of the English Association*, vol. iv., 1913); W. L. Phelps, *Essays on Modern Dramatists*, 1921.

[1] Stanley Houghton, Gilbert Cannan, Harold Brighouse, Miss Sowerby, etc.

[2] See below, sect. 4. *The Tragedy of Nan*, 1909, etc.

[3] For the connection of this tendency with German "expressionism," see Ashley Dukes, *The Youngest Drama*, 1923.

4. Poetry.—The first years of the twentieth century seemed to show a decline in the vitality of English poetry. Swinburne and Meredith were approaching the end of their careers; Hardy and Kipling, still in the fullness of their vigour, belonged to the present, but not to the future. The symbolist and decadent movement was losing ground. John Davidson and Arthur Symons had produced their best work. That of Francis Thompson was going to be prematurely cut short. While the reaction against the Victorian ideal was in full swing, and the younger men would show coldness or disrespect to the memory of Tennyson, no strong new inspiration was coming forth. The best known poets of the hour were seeking for models, either, like Austin and Blunt, in the forcible careless romanticism of Byron; or, on the contrary, like Watts-Dunton, Gosse, Bridges, Watson, in a chastened purity of form, a delicate learned classicism, where the tradition of the preceding age mingled with the influence of the French "Parnasse." With both groups, the instinct of renovation was not inactive; poets were feeling their way, through unadorned simplicity or elaborate refinement; but their efforts were not backed by a sufficiently strong originality; and however just in various ways their intuitions might be, their art, even in its most facile or elegant achievements, suffered from a touch of uncertainty, or of the academic manner. There was in all this no fresh running spring.[1]

There was none either in artists at least as much inspired, but whose works, possibly owing to their very distinction, lacked all wide appeal: Housman, Trench, Doughty, Mrs. Woods. The first, in a single collection of meditated and finished pieces, has given a concentrated expression to a melancholy not unlike Hardy's; with the second, gifts of the first order have failed so far to awake a response in the instincts of the public; with Doughty, an epic imagination has spent itself in allegorical evocations too intellectual and austere, too full of the remembrance and the very language of the past, to get a genuine hold upon the present.[2]

On the contrary, the wide and popular success of Alfred Noyes, due to the clever handling of various resources, and to the energy of a facile eloquence, was not confirmed entirely by the judgment of the cultured few.[3]

About 1910 a generation of poets appeared. They had that abundance, and that sureness, which reveal fertile temperaments; and, in spite of their differences, or even oppositions, they bore a family likeness. Very soon, they forced the attention of the public. As early as 1912, an impression got abroad that a lyrical spring was begun; one spoke of the "Georgian" revival of poetry; and this epithet sounded like a challenge to the long reign which had also given its name to a poetical age.

These poets form a group, but in no wise a school. They do not care to profess a doctrine. They create, and follow the bent of their natures. Their notion of poetry is in their work. When probed, this reveals two main tendencies, both not new. Some look for beauty to a purification of experience, reached through imagination or culture; they like to forget the present, and their conscious care of form draws them, in many respects, towards the ideal of a

[1] Alfred Austin (1835–1913), Poet Laureate on the death of Tennyson.—Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, born in 1840: *Poetical Works*, 1915.—Theodore Watts-Dunton (1836–1914): *The Coming of Love*, 1897.—Edmund Gosse, born in 1849, eminent critic, published among other collections of verse, *New Poems*, 1879; *In Russet and Silver*, 1894; *The Autumn Garden*, 1908.—Robert Bridges, born in 1844, Poet Laureate on the death of A. Austin, critic and metrist, etc.: *The Growth of Love*, 1889; *Shorter Poems*, 1894, etc.; *Poetical Works*, 1913; see study by F. E. Brett Young, 1914.—Sir William Watson, born in 1858: *Wordsworth's Grave*, 1890; *Collected Poems*, 1906; *The Man Who Saw*, 1917, etc.

[2] Alfred Edward Housman, born in 1859: *A Shropshire Lad*, 1896.—Herbert Trench, born in 1865: *Collected Poems*, 1918.—Charles Montague Doughty, born in 1843, explorer and poet: *Travels in Arabia Deserta*, 1888; *The Dawn in Britain*, 1906–7.—Margaret Louise Woods, born in 1856: *Collected Poems*, 1913.

[3] Alfred Noyes, born in 1880: *Collected Poems*, 1910 and 1920.

classical and refined inspiration. The others, much more numerous, soothe the strain and uneasiness which the excessive search for elaborate perfection, and the attempts of artificial idealism, had laid deep in their sensibilities, by means of a vehement effort towards a direct simple utterance. They look to familiar, concrete subjects, and to spontaneous language and prosody, for the virtue of those immediate effusions in which literature at periodic intervals tries to refresh itself.

The whole endeavour of this group thus shows, in theory, no distinctly original feature. Their æsthetic aims remind one of those of the preceding period; or more often, beyond the concentrated discipline of the Victorian age, they fall back upon the liberating example of Blake and Wordsworth. In this deeper sense, they really continue the new Romanticism, the principle of which they but more broadly put into practice. They, too, attempt to remedy the stiffening of an art grown mechanical, by means of the loosing of the soul's set habits; they, too, want to recover the virgin freshness of the sense of reality, and load the most spontaneous language with a spiritual force, which exceeds the explicit strength of intense words. Once more, we thus have here one of those "returns to nature" which betoken a resolve to reach a more intact plane of the inner life. However, these writers are distinguished by characteristics which are their own, being derived from the necessarily unique temper of their age. Their aspiration to reality is more courageous, bolder or more violent; their humanitarian feeling is strengthened by the progress of social consciousness. They carry within themselves the memory of the century of artistic life which has elapsed since Wordsworth's time. And while they practise the same gospel, they have an intuition of the commonplace which threatens them in this direction as well. More definitely warned by the experience of the intervening years, their effort is more uncompromising; they exceed the degree of simplicity, of naturalness, of direct realism, where Wordsworth had stopped; they equal the audacity of Blake, who had proceeded, at one stroke, as far as the future was to proceed; but they are free from his mystic terrors, and their inspiration, less divinely puerile, enjoys a more supple and careless youth.

The faith with which these poets are instinct is thus not without precedents; but actual practice is all in art; and the genuineness of their gifts lends the quality of an initiative to their work. On the eve of the war, their group had risen in stature, and they were beginning to fulfil their promise. They went through the storm of the war, in which one of them lost his life; and their generation has since reached its final growth. It thus appears that they can lay claim to a high order of merit, but that none belongs to the class of masters who dominate a literary age.

The reason is not that they lack talent. T. Sturge Moore, Lascelles Abercrombie, James Elroy Flecker, who have affinities with classical inspiration, and with whom one might join Lady Margaret Sackville, or the writers of plays in verse like Binyon and Drinkwater,[1] have honourably carried on a great tradition. The first unites the sober elegance of antique art with a wholly modern intellectuality; the second in his philosophical poetry has an austere but high nobleness. Among freer temperaments, attracted in various ways by the appeals of concrete life, and desirous before all of expressing themselves sincerely, we meet with a wide range of individualities. Rupert Brooke, already departed and secure of fame, owes a more entire and a broader affinity with the instincts of his race to the many-sidedness of his nature, and to his position, between university culture which permeated him on the one hand, and on the other the independent curiosities of young England which he shared. The British heart has accepted him for its own; the fine seriousness of his last poems, inspired by the war, has that note of absolute spontaneousness which had been at times lacking in the happy fancies of his verve. This note William Henry Davies has struck from the first; his genuine experience, his intimate prolonged contact with the misery of life and the intoxication of the open road to the unknown, impart an accent of penetrating truth to his delicate naturalism. He possesses without effort that fresh simplicity, after which others will strive in vain; and his imaginative lyricism glorifies vulgar things with a tender glamour.

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[1] See above, sect. 3. *Selected Poems,* by J. D., 1922.

Walter de la Mare is the poet of dim suggestions, of fugitive thrills; he evokes the wondering of a child, and communicates the feeling of invisible presences. The method of his art is that of the younger Blake, and of Coleridge; but he is a contemporary of Maeterlinck, and his subtle symbolism has the mellowness made possible by a long habit of the mind. It is to symbols, as well, that Wilfrid Wilson Gibson is naturally drawn; he finds them in the crudest scenes of the life of the poor, from which pity strikes out a gleam of brotherly humanity; his social inspiration has shaped for itself an adequate instrument, a popular language, a faithful adherence to the tone of conversation, which goes beyond Wordsworth, and a free verse, voluntarily shorn of all regular measure. When he returns to rhyme, he reaches a more poetical and rare suggestiveness, without losing the realistic flavour of his utterance. David Herbert Lawrence, the most harshly vigorous of those writers, in verse as in prose, has turned symbolism to new uses in producing effects of concentrated passion; he has loaded reassuring familiar words with a sensuous ardour which wells up like an obscure flow of lava from what they tell and from what they leave unsaid.

John Masefield, who more than them all has the gift of facile energy, is probably the central figure of this group. His verbal inventiveness is abundant and racy; the movement, the sweep of his verse at first arrest the reader, create the impression of a manner less original, more largely reminiscent of Romantic eloquence; but his nerve, his power of concrete imagining, his broad virile sense of frank realities, belong indeed to his own time; and his joy in words is tempered by a secret sense of dissatisfaction with the hindrance which language places in the way of expression. He feels with Kipling the intoxication of physical effort and of the sea; with Whitman, that of simple fraternities; and still, he shows a power of intellectual concentration and of meditative harmonies. The animation of his work, lyrical, dramatic or narrative, the variety of his rhythms, the ease and direct vigour of his style, would secure him what his competitors lack, greatness, if he had done more than try his hand at various kinds, without fully realizing himself in any. Lastly, Harold Monro, whose inspiration is not free either from literary reminiscences, has also a personal temperament; he strikes fine, airy chords, in which quiver the pensive sensibilities of our time; the remembrance of Shelley's poignant melodies, of Keats's sumptuousness, lingers in his lines; but the quality as of old age, which this memory assumes from the intervening century of intense life, mingles with an acutely conscious youth, that of a soul eagerly bent on drawing fresh stimulation from the springs of elementary experience.[1]

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[1] Thomas Sturge Moore, born in 1870, critic and poet: *Art and Life,* 1910; *The Sicilian Idyll, etc.,* 1911; *Danaë, etc.,* 1920.—Lascelles Abercrombie, born in 1881, poet and critic: *Interludes and Poems,* 1908; *Deborah,* 1913, etc.—James Elroy Flecker (1884-1915): *Collected Poems,* 1916, etc.; see study by D. Goldring, 1922.—Lady Margaret Sackville, born in 1882: *Bertrud and Other Dramatic Poems,* 1911; *Songs of Aphrodite,* 1913, etc.—Rupert Brooke (1887–1915): *Collected Poems,* 1918.—William H. Davies, born in 1870: *Autobiography of a Super-Tramp* (prose), 1908; *Collected Poems,* 1916.—Walter de la Mare, born in 1873: *Songs of Childhood,* 1902; *Poems,* 1906; *The Listeners and Other Poems,* 1912; *Motley and Other Poems,* 1918, etc.—Wilfrid Wilson Gibson, born in 1880: *Daily Bread,* 1910; *Collected Poems,* 1918.—David Herbert Lawrence (see above, sect. 2): *Love Poems and Others,* 1913; *Amores,* 1916; *New Poems,* 1918, etc.—John Masefield, born in 1874: *Collected Poems and Plays,* 1919; *Collected Poems,* 1923; see study by W. H. Hamilton, 1922.—Harold Monro, born in 1879, poet and critic: *Before Dawn,* 1911; *Trees,* 1915; *Strange Meetings,* 1917, etc. For all this movement see the collections of verse: *Georgian Poetry,* 1911–12, 1913–15, 1916–17, 1918–19, 4 vols., 1913–20); *New*

Charm, gracefulness, even strength, and the elements of a distinguished originality: such gifts have been granted to contemporary poets in exceptional profusion. However, it is not certain but that the many collections in which poems, as soon as published, are gathered to last, may contain almost entirely perishable matter. One looks in vain through them for an artistic form both new and fruitful, and for the sure marks of an undoubted master; or if these are to be seen, only the future will be able to know them.

The war poets are outside the limits of this study. Several of them are pathetic figures, having died in the struggle, leaving behind them the proof of precocious talents, and of an early painful maturity; others have survived, stamped for life by the ordeal. Their generation was no less promising than that of their elders. Their lyricism has the same characteristics. With them too the distinguishing note is spontaneity, and a frankness which seems to be attacking deceitful appearances through all conventions; their realism is tempered with humour and tenderness; their love of life clings with desperate fondness to the serene aspects of nature; their patriotism cherishes the familiar images of the earth; their social and human pity combines itself with a revolt against the cruelty of their experience, with a great love and a great hope, both insecure. Few are the utterances in which the struggle, the immediate emotions of heroism and energy, receive unreserved expression, and are self-sufficient. Fewer still are the words of hatred. The main themes are resignation, suffering, bitterness, and the impassioned return of the soul to dear memories.[1] This spirit of moral rebellion seems to predominate still with the young poets of the post-war days.

The last movement that it is possible to perceive—a purely literary one this time—is imagism. Contrary to the preceding ones, it has a definite doctrine. It is related to tendencies now active in other domains—the novel, the stage [2]—and in other countries: America, France, for example. Its principle is to push the search for spontaneousness and immediacy up to the point where the obtrusion of interpreting and constructive thought has not yet succeeded in making itself felt. The materials of art will thus be the rough data of mental life—"images," or complex and instantaneous bundles of intellectual and emotional perceptions. To present them without deforming them, with their untouched freshness and vigour, is to offer the most direct and most certainly efficacious suggestions to the mind of the reader. The actual impact of reality is thus transmitted to us, with such force that the tyranny of practical life is vanquished, and for a moment we escape its demands. A writer, the imagists believe, should avoid all abstraction, and every architectural attempt; so he must be very sparing in his use of language, restricting his notations to indispensable elements; and he must grant measures and cadences of all sorts their full value—not secondary, but essential—in the elaboration of the total effect.[3]

Numbers, 1914; J. C. Squire, *Selections from Modern Poets*, 2 vols., 1919–24; M. C. Sturgeon, *Studies of Contemporary Poets*, 1916; M. Wilkinson, *New Voices*, 1920, etc. These writers, on the whole, do not renew the prosodic form, already so supple, of English verse. They give more amplitude to a liberty of rhythmical construction which the genius of the language calls for, or tolerates without effort; but the "free verse," properly speaking, in no way related to any perceptible periodicity, remains an exception with them.

[1] Besides Rupert Brooke (see above), mention may be made of Robert Graves, born in 1895: *Fairies and Fusiliers*, 1917.—Robert Nichols, born in 1893: *Ardours and Endurances*, 1917.—Siegfried Sassoon, born in 1886: *War Poems*, 1919.—Charles Hamilton Sorley, born in 1895, killed in action, 1915: *Marlborough and Other Poems*, 1916. See for these poets the *Treasury of War Poetry, British and American*, 1917–19.

[2] See above, sects. 2 and 3.

[3] For this movement, see the works of Richard Aldington, born in 1892: *Images Old and New*, 1915; *Images of War*, 1919; *Images of Desire*, 1920, etc.—Mrs. Aldington: *Garden*, 1916, etc.—F. S. Flint: *Cadences*, 1915, etc.—Aldous Huxley: *The Defeat of Youth, etc.*, 1918; *Leda*, 1920, etc.—Collections of verse: *The Imagists*, 1914; *Some Imagist Poets*, 1915–16–17; the review, *The Egoist*, 1914, etc. For a sort of literary

Whatever the future of this method may be, it obviously constitutes one more expression of the needs which are producing at the same time a discontinuous style, a return to elementary values, in various kinds of literature, and of picturesque or musical arts; needs which are shared in equally by the refined or jaded sensibilities of old nations, and by young America.[1] English imagism is a sign, at the same time, of the decomposition and analysis towards which, in many planes, the instincts of æsthetic renovation seem to converge; and of the gradual rise of an international artistic movement, no longer simply through contagious influences and fashions, but under the stress of an interior development.[2]

5. **The Possibilities of the Future.**—If the succession of ages, in the history of English literature, offers a marked periodicity, is it possible to foresee in any measure the further working of this rhythm?—What seem to be, at this uncertain obscure hour, the possibilities of the future?

The last recognizable period is that which, beginning about 1875–1880, has reinstated the freedom of divergent instincts in literature and in thought. This new Romanticism would, if the alternation of phases were to continue, call for the advent of an age with classical tendencies, organized round a new search for balance, the controlling principle of which would be furnished by intelligence.

A movement of this kind has tentatively appeared in France during the last fifteen years. It would be according to precedents, and to the respective characteristics of the two nations, that English literature should be slightly late relatively to that of France. It is true, England's psychological development has assumed a quicker rate of progress; while spiritual exchanges between countries are on the increase, and there is a further growth of some international influences whose trend would be to equalize the courses of the various national evolutions; yet, in spite of all, England is still slower in the initiatives of the mind, especially when the reactions that are preparing bring on a properly intellectual phase.

Some symptoms might support the conjecture that a transition were begun, carrying the British mind towards a period similar to what is, in France, the rational Neo-Classicism, which tends to come forward through the confusion of schools and groups. Such signs are: the persistence in a very active state, among all the varieties of contemporary poetry, of an inspiration not indeed academic, but classical, through the stressing of ancient values, and through the condensation and elaboration of form; next, the place still held, in the universal disorder of minds, by the desire for a moral and social balance founded on a more scientific organization of life, and that effort of intelligence, which is still a leading trait of young England; the coming back in strength of philosophical rationalism, in a tempered and more supple form it is true, with the

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cubism, see the collections entitled *Wheels* (1916, 1917, 1918, etc.), and the work of E., O. and S. Sitwell.

[1] See the work of Ezra Pound, etc.

[2] Contemporary English criticism deserves more than a passing remark. It has its own physiognomy, to be found less in the erudition of a Saintsbury than in the fine studies of a Sir Edmund Gosse, whose delicate verse we have mentioned above; the penetrating judgment of a Sir Walter Raleigh (died in 1922); the searching analyses of a Lytton Strachey (see below). Learned professors, such as W. P. Ker (died in 1923); or writers more in touch with actuality, judges at once of books and of religious or moral life, as recently Stopford A. Brooke, or yesterday A. Clutton-Brock; or novelist, poet and critic in turn, as Sir A. Quiller-Couch; or again, devoting himself both to interpretation and to original creation, as J. C. Squire—English critics, in a general way, have continued the tradition of Coleridge and Hazlitt. Their ideal is not that of methodical rigour, but of intuition that has been kindled into life by the deep contact of personalities. They have raised literary appreciation to the status of an art which tends to re-create, under a clearer form, the human characteristics of their subjects; theirs is an impressionism strengthened by a very sure and constant sense of moral qualities and which, far from excluding knowledge, seeks rather, of set purpose, to fertilize it.

"neo-realists" (see above, VII. ii. 1); the success of critical works instinct with a purpose of uncompromising lucidity, like those of Lytton Strachey,[1] T. S. Eliot,[2] etc.; lastly, the characteristics of the most significant writers, among the novelists and poets of to-day—a James Joyce, a Virginia Woolf, a Dorothy Richardson, a Rose Macaulay (*Potterism*, 1920; *Dangerous Ages*, 1921, etc.), a Katherine Mansfield, a Rebecca West, an Edward Morgan Forster, a Richard Aldington, an F. S. Flint; the convergence of "imagism," with an ironical and rather dry criticism, and with impressionist discontinuity in the presentment of things. But this last symptom, probably the most interesting, is complex, and gives rise to a problem.

Are imagism, and such a style as James Joyce's, in themselves the signs of an intellectual, or of an emotional tendency? In the plane of literary and psychological correspondences, do they belong to the province of classicism, or to that of Romanticism?

At first sight, they are unequivocally the heirs of Neo-Romanticism, the principle of which they seem to extend so far as to exhaust it; so they could not be claimed as the signs of a contrary phase. They complete the break-up, no longer unconscious, but voluntary, of all logical bonds; they achieve the victory of immediate discontinuity over all thought-out construction, and thus of feeling over reason; they appeal to the new psychology, which has laid stress again on the rough data of perception, at the expense of the diagrams worked out by intelligence. Their deeper roots are in that evolution of art and thought which for the last quarter of a century has accompanied the revival of Romanticism, and in all the activities of the mind has destroyed the artificial static schemes which a premature rationalism had enforced.

But when closely studied, the attempts of the more original among younger writers reveal a strong and, it even seems, a predominant intellectuality. The "images" which they work upon are, according to their own descriptions, bundles in which the various elements of the inner life have not yet been dissociated; sensation and emotion are thus largely represented in them, but intelligence is not excluded either. What matters more, a method which sets forth those data in their concrete truth, without linking them up together, thereby will have nothing to do with the impulses of passion and emotion; for sentiment, in its own way, is an organizing force; it tends to unify consciousness, and thus to stamp an order upon it, quite as imperiously as reason, though in a different way. To avoid constructing in any manner life or an artistic work, is to leave open to one's self only one attitude, a self-repressing objectivity. In fact, discontinuous literature is intellectual, and often cold. It appeals to the reader's collaboration, demanding from him a very intense effort of combination and mental synthesis; therefore, the faculties which it calls into play are primarily constructive. Through an indirect course, it thus eventually falls back upon the purposes of classicism, because the latter's psychological needs are to a large extent its own.

A literature of the kind here described would then in actual fact be a mixed one; and this is indeed the conclusion which could have been expected, as soon as we took into account the gradual mingling of characteristics, and the interpenetration of periods. The intermittent flashes of "imagism" and of the various recent forms of impressionism, whose secret inner principle seems to be the interrupted rhythm of moving pictures, would just betoken the application of intellectuality to a background of instincts saturated with a now chronic Romanticism. It would be the neo-classicism of a pragmatist age, incapable of charming away, so as to give itself up to constructive reason, the spells of the concrete and the intuitive, with which the Romantic revelation has enriched

[1] *Eminent Victorians; Queen Victoria; Books and Characters*, etc.

[2] *The Sacred Wood*, etc.

the modern sense of things. That paradoxical complexity would thus, more clearly than ever, point to the mingling of tendencies, to their being hoarded up in consciousness into so complete a treasure, and so heavy a burden, that the birth of an untainted literary period, and the unsophisticated joy of an absolute artistic renovation, would cease to be possible. The very working of the psychological rhythm, and its continued fecundity, would thus be endangered. It would follow thence that the confusion of principles, efforts and methods in which our age is entangled, was an unavoidable consequence of the thorough saturation of minds. The immediate future of English literature would be conditioned before all by that exhaustion of its untouched resources. The neo-classicism which seems to be preparing in England would be contaminated in its very fountainhead by the intimate fusion of Romantic streams, just as in France the neo-classicism which has defined itself and is gaining the ascendancy proves unable to eliminate the virus which flows in spite of itself through its veins. Romanticism henceforward would be incurable, and would triumph in the very victories that were won over it.

But complexity offers art a resource, while it is a foe to genuine renovations, and to unadulterated fresh feelings. The relative stagnancy of the rhythm, which has probably become a permanent trait of English literature, would not prevent the latter from producing still for a long time precious fruits, the more rich in taste as they had been permeated and coloured by more various juices.

And should the secret vitality of this literature be in a way undermined, it would be enough, to render it its full vigour, that it should receive a substantial influx of fresh energy. In several modes, such an influx seems to be at present preparing. The life instinct might be at work, and germs be silently awaking, in the pessimism of these anxious years.

A first mode would be that of social changes deep enough to rejuvenate in a large measure the instincts from which the national culture draws its sustenance. The lower classes dimly partake in the intellectual evolution of society, and so in the intermixture of tendencies; however, they remain the reservoir of virgin sensibilities and intact forces. English literature, like the French, mostly lives by the inflow of sap from the people. Recent influences: the much wider spread of teaching, the freer access of the many to knowledge, the social rehabilitation of the schoolmaster, are extending the field in which an elementary education allows latent gifts to grow conscious, without exhausting them in advance. The number of the writers who are sons of the people is notably on the increase; there is being created an intellectual proletariat, in which are more broadly merging the modest representatives of the professional class, along with erratic units from the various trades and from life. Moreover, the great advance of the workmen in political experience and moral maturity is adding numerous and robust elements to that reserve stock of temperaments less weakened vitally, in which talent may grow. The prospect of a rapid development of English democracy towards an economic structure, and the possibility of a society in which work would be the controlling principle of organization, vaguely open the perspective of a literature no doubt less refined, but to a large extent cured of the illness of its opulent old age. The "People's Theatre," the "pageants," the works of such writers as William Henry Davies or David Herbert Lawrence, as also those of Carpenter, in various ways lend some plausibility to this conjecture.

On the other hand, changes may be introduced into the collective mind of the British people from the outside; or rather, this mind may be modified by its contact with forces which, acting from the external world, efficiently stimulate its latent powers. To this order belong, first, foreign influences. On the whole, the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and the first quarter of the twentieth, have been in England a period of increased receptivity, in which the country's inner divergences have allowed it to feel wider sympathies, and to assimilate more freely. The radiating example of France chiefly, then of Scandinavia, of Russia, has given a definite aim to many confused artistic impulses, from the first relaxing of Victorian discipline, to the time of the war. At the present day, the English mind is not impervious to influences; but it does not feel any single one with abnormal intensity; in its disquietude it does not seem to find in any a stimulus sufficient to polarize its scattered energies, and to create a decisive magnetism. Or rather, if it can at all receive such an impulse, it is not from the literature and thought of this or that people, but from the powerful and manifold suggestion of the whole human world.

A limitless contact with the variety of the earth and of races, and the internationalism of imagination, seem to be at the present time the main ways through which the imperious need of a psychological renewal is seeking satisfaction in England. The Empire naturally offers this need already substantial gratifications. It is not only that transplanted shoots from the stock of the English people have recovered, in a different soil, all the primitive freshness of the old sap; that sturdy nations, and original literatures, are growing in South Africa, in Canada, in Australia, in New Zealand; so that the future of British letters might be even now discovered in the Dominions, where it is assuming an actual reality. Whatever may be in the time to come the spiritual relationship of the daughter nations to the mother country, the youth of the former is not an absolute anodyne to the anxious maturity of the latter. Besides, the moral unity of the Dominions consists before all, to-day, in their common connection with the centre from which their intellectual civilization sprang. Should ever this connection be broken through the extinction of the original focus, there would still be British literatures, scattered all through the world; there would no longer be any English literature.

But nothing points to the extinction of that focus; and one of the ways in which its vitality is maintained, is just that it is beginning to strengthen its rays with those of the distant fires which it has itself lighted. The literary exploitation of the Empire is the most superficial aspect of this fusion. The British colonies are offering themes to English writers; an exoticism of the Empire is developing; but the colonies are as well giving writers to England. Kipling is the most illustrious representative of a group whose number is growing. The exchanges of subjects, of influences, and of human capital between the Dominions and the mother country, are still very active; and the latter receives to-day no less than she gives.

However vast the Empire may be, the psychological expansion of England is not confined to it. All the oceans are included within the moral domain of the curiosity, the initiative and the energy of a people of sailors and merchants. The literature of the sea is properly English, and Joseph Conrad has dedicated his talent in homage to his adoptive fatherland. The salt waves are the baptism in which is tempered afresh the healthy instinct which obscurely guides the British genius. But the continents, no less than the oceans, are overrun, studied, absorbed. Explorers, travellers, adventurers, tourists of all kinds, drink in the living images of the originality of all climates, all horizons, all manners. This invasion of the earth by the assimilative spirit of a people is no new development, and other contemporary civilizations show the same tendencies to various degrees. Still, the cosmopolitanism of taste and interest is in the literature and art of England more accentuated than it was ever before, and more active than with any other people.

There is not left any no man's land to colonize; the Empire has probably found its limits; the hopes of missionaries are restricted to narrow bounds; trade meets with the competition of rival nations, and of the Dominions themselves. But the painter, the novelist, the poet, the philosopher, roam through the world, live the life of the peoples, settle among them, drink in the charm, the atmosphere, the colour, the moral suggestions of the soil, the sky and the men. Never before have the wandering intellectuals, rich or poor, sometimes living by the labour of their hands, tramps of roads, of cities and of harbours, who leave England, to come back some day or never, and mingle with their work the flavour of foreign countries, been more numerous. A majority of the younger generation of English writers are rootless, or mobile. Whether or not these experiences result in diaries of travel, descriptions, studies of manners, in an exotic range of images, there enter from them into the very tissue of thoughts a sense of the vastness and diversity of the world, a knowledge of the varied beauty spread over the earth, and of the unexpected rights which the strangest civilizations may have to live. Knowledge is the beginning of respect and of sympathy. Even such a professed apostle of imperialism as Rudyard Kipling owes to the immensity of his horizon a suppleness of imagination which subtly tempers the voluntary narrowness of his gospel. The sometimes haughty or hard policy of British colonization towards the subjected peoples is thus counteracted by an inner effort of justice and charity, which in the long run softens both intentions and acts.[1]

The United States of America are related with that expansion in a manner which, though essential, is difficult to define. American literature, long emancipated, is seeking its own paths; and the jealous independence of a great nation is freeing itself more and more from the rhythms of the older culture. The values consecrated in London still often meet with an equal esteem in America; and this is increasingly true in the other direction as well. Exchanges are still frequent; writers and artists readily cross the Atlantic, but they cross it from either shore. The magnetism of England attracted a Henry James; conversely, the seduction of a new land draws English energies, and of all kinds. The community of language, and the persistent traits of two cultures which are diverging, but have not yet grown opposed, and will perhaps never do so, maintain between the two peoples a spiritual contact which benefits one and the other. Altogether, it is probable that the United States at the present time support the prestige of English culture, rather than their own culture is guided by that of England. But American vigour cannot be to British maturity the source of a decisive and direct renovation; the older nation could not let itself be permeated by the radiating influx of the younger one, unless it faced the risk of losing its separate personality.

It is thus without excluding America, but without giving it as large a place as traditional affinities might appear to claim, that the English genius seems to come into contact with all the variety of the physical and moral world, as if it desired that nothing terrestrial should remain foreign to it.

What may be the subconscious goal of this expansion, and what might be its result? It is difficult to imagine what an international literature would be. Superior literary creation has remained so far bound up with the complex psychological organization which a national mind represents, and chiefly with that perfect, intimately possessed instrument of expression, a mother tongue. How far could the internationality of subjects, suggestions and themes permeate the creative activities of a group of writers, unless these had severed the links which tie them to the exclusive particularity of one spirit and one language?

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[1] The frequent, prolonged or intense contact with foreign countries (Europe, the colonies, distant continents) has left its mark, among writers of the present or very recent generation here mentioned, chiefly upon the personalities and works of Max Beerbohm, Hilaire Belloc, Arnold Bennett, A. Blackwood, Rupert Brooke, Edward Carpenter, Joseph Conrad, W. H. Davies, Clemence Dane, C. M. Doughty, J. E. Flecker, E. M. Forster, John Galsworthy, W. L. George, W. H. Hudson, James Joyce, Rudyard Kipling, Richard Le Gallienne, Stephen MacKenna, Compton Mackenzie, John Masefield, W. S. Maugham, Leonard Merrick, Harold Monro, George Moore, Alfred Noyes, Bernard Shaw, Herbert Trench, Hugh Walpole, H. G. Wells. Many more might be mentioned, whom this brief study has to pass over.

If the instinctive impulse which scatters through the world a large number of the English writers already notable, or destined to be, and widely opens the attention of the British people to foreign things, is only derived from the mere will to live; if that exploration of the earth is an attenuated, indirect, and as it were repressed form of political or commercial annexation, there could not be in the process any fruitful psychological initiative, either for one people or for mankind. The rival cultures will follow English culture in that field; they have already followed it there; indeed, they had preceded it. The diffusion of French literature, for one, is of older standing; it acts more largely, again, through its intrinsic merits, and is less kept to the ways laid out by colonization and commerce. This diffusion, it is true, is different. French literature gives itself, rather than it assimilates, and feeds on what it touches. The French mind, though more homogeneous and organized, has opened itself for the last two centuries to many influences; it is, however, less attentively, less widely in contact with the realities and the problems of the world.

The cosmopolitan curiosity of England is still bound by its origins with the traditions of British imperialism; it continues certain habits, certain acts, which are part and parcel of those traditions; it is so to say a reflex expression of them. As such, it gives vent to a national egoism, and clashes with other egoisms. A conflict of this kind has been till now a characteristic, if not a condition, of the life of peoples; for this very reason, it seems impossible to perceive in it an instinct of moral renovation at work.

But the intellectual activities are those in which is concentrated the idealism which springs, with slow gradual effort, from the practical decisions of human groups. There is a germ of disinterestedness in that form of English expansion. It is akin to the sincere humanitarianism of enlightened opinion, to the desire for a more equitable justice among peoples; it is closely related to the sympathy which welcomes the half-realized hope of a league of nations. In the intercourse between the mother country and the Dominions, it has brought about the relaxing of political bonds, and the development of the Empire towards a liberal commonwealth. It seems as if by trying to make itself as broad as the earth, as varied as the races and civilizations of men, the English genius were obscurely attempting to create in itself that all-embracing unity, which the movement of thought and desire, and the pressure of material necessities, agree in pointing out as the goal of the human march onward.

In this higher plane, the conflict of a culture with the others is no longer fatal. Bound as it is with one language, that is to say still with a national particularism, and excluding every rival in its own domain, English literature could only gain an encroaching ubiquity by obstructing spiritual originalities at least equal to its own. Its best and finest intuitions raise it above such an undertaking. The universality which it seems to seek is that of knowledge, of acceptance, and does not exclude parallel universalities of the same kind. Wholly ideal, the possession which it claims clashes with no sovereignty, either of the body or of the mind. What seems to dawn in this instinctive effort, is the dim sense of the reconciliation which the future will perhaps realize between nationalities, limited and mutually exclusive psychological organisms, and the internationalism of the commonalty of man.

It is difficult to conjecture whether such an initiative might open the way to a fruitful renewing of intellectual life. It is only possible to believe that by shaping its course in the direction which civilization, it seems, tends to follow, the English genius shows a vitality still supple, and capable of adaptations. If literary and artistic forms can bear without disruption the changes wrought by that much wider mental outlook and nurture, it may be expected that a new cycle of thought and art could result from it. For thus to increase the range of one's personality is not to renounce it. The national quality of a mind, of a literature, is not lost in that effort to embrace, without selfishly absorbing them, the material and moral realities which the universe demands that we tolerate. On the contrary, it seems as if the gradual ripening of modern English thought had allowed it to realize itself better and more fully; as if the original nationality of England had gained thus in many-sidedness and in depth. The complexity which is now created by the inevitable mingling of tendencies is, no doubt, here as elsewhere, the means of a more penetrating reflection, of a superior and perhaps unexceptionable intellectualism, whose supple working tends to resemble the intuitive play of consciousness, so thoroughly as to be indistinguishable from it.

However this may be, the most noble virtue, and the strongest appeal, of English literature at the present day, reside in its social generosity; in its self-criticism, freed from the shackles by which it had not long ago accepted to be bound; in the human sympathy which counteracts the force—it once was the harshness—of its character, and the insularity of its horizons. The secular treasure of beauty which it preserves and ever increases owes to that inner progress of the British soul a softer and a more winning radiance.[1]

To be consulted: F. W. Chandler, *Aspects of Modern Drama,* 1916; A. Chevalley, *Le Roman anglais de notre temps,* 1921; J. W. Cunliffe, *English Literature during the Last Half-Century,* 1920; B. Fehr, *Die englische Literatur des* 19 *und* 20 *Jahrhunderts,* 1923; H. T. and W. Follett, *Some Modern Novelists,* 1918; W. L. George, *A Novelist on Novels,* 1918; M. S. Jameson, *Modern Drama in Europe,* 1920; R. Brimley Johnson, *Some Contemporary Novelists* (*Women*), 1920; idem (*Men*), 1922; J. M. Manly and E. Rickert, *Contemporary British Literature,* 1922; H. Monro, *Some Contemporary Poets,* 1920; Sir H. Newbolt, *A New Study of English Poetry,* 1917; W. M. Parker, *Modern Scottish Writers,* 1917; W. L. Phelps, *The Advance of English Poetry in the Twentieth Century,* 1918; idem, *The Twentieth Century Theatre,* 1919; annual reviews of English poetry, dramas and novels in the *Revue Germanique,* 1910–14, 1920–23; W. F. Schirmer, *Die englische Roman der neuesten Zeit,* 1923; M. C. Sturgeon, *Studies of Contemporary Poets,* 1916; M. O. Wilkinson, *New Voices,* 1919; H. Williams, *Modern English Writers,* 1920.

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[1] An aspect of the literary individualism described above (chap. v. sect. 1) is the revival of the essay, which since R. L. Stevenson has returned to its former tradition, and freed itself from the somewhat impersonal dignity in which the influence of the leading reviews had confined it in the period 1830–70. At the present day it is an unfettered, infinitely supple expression of the most various temperaments. Many of the novelists, poets, critics, etc., of the contemporary age would deserve a special mention as essay-writers. To the already quoted names of Max Beerbohm, H. Belloc, A. Clutton-Brock, R. Le Gallienne, Mrs. Meynell, etc., should here be added, whether among the living or the recently departed, those of A. Birrell, A. Dobson, Havelock Ellis, Sir James Frazer (*Sir Roger de Coverley, etc.,* 1920; eminent historian of religions); Andrew Lang, Vernon Lee (Violet Paget), E. V. Lucas, J. Middleton Murry, G. S. Street, etc. See *Modern English Essays,* 1870 to 1920, 1923; *Selected Modern English Essays,* by H. Milford, 1925.

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This index contains the names of the writers referred to in the text. It does not include the critics, commentators and editors who figure in the notes, nor (with a few exceptions) the historical personages mentioned in the course of the work.

Titles of anonymous works, of works of doubtful authorship and of works written in collaboration will be found printed in italics. For all others the reference is to the name of the author.

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